

SMITH'S

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MAGAZINE

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VOLUME 12

JANUARY, 1911

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CHAPTER I.

DOCTOR BRISTOW awaited the entrance of the lady whom he was hoping to make his mother-in-law, with somewhat less of mental perturbation than most young men would have felt in a similar situation. Deeply as he believed himself in love with Marcia, charming and desirable as she appeared to him, it did not occur to him to question his own eligibility as a suitor. Especially as a suitor for Mrs. Bostwick's daughter.

He glanced critically about the room in which he waited. He had never been in the Bostwick house before; his meeting with Marcia, his courtship of her, swift and sweet, had taken place at Kennebunk, where she had been spending the summer with the Lawrences. His residence in Salesby had been of too recent a date to give him a very large acquaintance among its inhabitants. And so he sat for the first time in the home of his affianced, and awaited his first glimpse of her mother.

The room repelled him. It was stiff, austere, uncompromising. It faced the north, and through its long, French windows, opening on to a railed piazza too narrow for use, the hard north light of the New England afternoon streamed. The walls were covered to

the high ceiling with a cold, neutral-tinted paper; large pictures hung at regular intervals against them—two or three very badly painted ancestral portraits; two or three dark-colored landscapes. The furniture was of a sort which Doctor Bristow had thought extinct—glistening horsehair mounted upon wonderfully carved and highly varnished walnut. The convolutions in the legs of the square centre table fairly fascinated him for a time. The round lamp which stood in its exact middle was unobjectionable—a green bowl, with an angular shade of Japanese grass cloth. There were a few books on one corner of the table, an old-fashioned workbasket on another, and midway between them a little glass bowl of fringed gentians.

Loring Bristow's half-supercilious expression vanished as he saw their blue, delicate grace. They were a vision of Marcia, shy, lovely, rare, the exquisite flowering of a hard, rough soil, more wonderful than all the luxuriance of tropic growths. He crossed the room and lifted the bowl to his face.

As he put it down, the long, drab portières at the back of the room parted, and Mrs. Bostwick stood before him. There was no smile of greeting on her handsome face, no easy cordiality in her manner. She looked at him

with an expression remote, impersonal, and yet searching. The handclasp she gave him was strong, but rather with the strength of physical habit than with any impulse of friendliness.

"I had Marcia's letter telling me of the situation last night," she said, after a conventional word or two. "I am glad to see you so soon afterward."

"I got home from my holiday at Kennebunk only yesterday," he replied. "And you see I have come as soon as I decently could to ask your consent to my engagement to Marcia—to our marriage; I hope the engagement will be a very brief one."

Mrs. Bostwick still held him with that steady, disconcerting gaze of hers.

"Marcia is very young," she remarked.

"I suppose children always seem absurdly young to their parents," replied the young man, smiling. "But my mother had been married four years, and had had two children when she was twenty-two—Marcia's age."

"Yes," admitted Mrs. Bostwick with a half sigh, "we used to marry very young. But I did not mean only in years. Marcia is younger in her experience than many young women of her age—than most of them, I think. She has seen very little of the world, knows very little of life—or of men."

She ended with another look of deliberate scrutiny at the tall, broad, rudely handsome young man before her. He smiled, showing a mouth full of firm white teeth beneath his tawny mustache.

"You do not know what a charm her unsophistication is, Mrs. Bostwick," he said.

"Yes, I do," Mrs. Bostwick contradicted him. "I realize it fully. I regret it. If my circumstances had been other than they were, I should have striven to eradicate that particular form of charm in my daughter. I should have traveled over the world with her, showing her all sides of life. I should have given her a scientific education to offset that inexperience which men—of a certain type—find so agreeable in their feminine belongings. As it is, I

have given her the best education I could, and Marcia is not untrained mentally."

"She has a beautiful mind," declared her suitor politely. "But tell me, Mrs. Bostwick, what does it all mean? Are you not going to allow our engagement, because you think I have taken advantage of Marcia's inexperience? Are you going to insist that she see more of life and more of men before you allow her to marry? I am not conceited"—he swelled with consciousness of his virile good looks, of his dominating presence—"and it is not vanity which leads me to say that I do not think waiting would make any difference. Marcia is the most loyal soul alive."

"How long have you been in Salesby, Doctor Bristow?" asked Mrs. Bostwick suddenly, passing over his exposition of Marcia's character.

"Two years. I bought out Doctor Greenfield's practice when he was obliged to go to California."

"Of course you are making enough to support a wife?"

Doctor Bristow's eyes appraised the room in which he sat before he answered, with a half smile:

"Otherwise I should not have asked a woman to marry me. I have a small income of my own, and my practice is growing daily. Of course it was pretty close shaving at first."

"We have a large field for physicians in Salesby," said Mrs. Bostwick. "The introduction of the mills has destroyed our old boast that we were the healthiest community on the North Shore."

"My practice is not among the mill hands—to any extent," the doctor replied half contemptuously. "If it were, I should scarcely hope to have much to offer a wife for a long time."

The lady whom he was interviewing looked at him with the same unfathomable, searching gaze which had already considerably discomfited him during the talk. He had never, since he left college, where one or two of his instructors had had an uncomfortable trick of regarding a man as though he were a mere biological specimen, been sub-

jected to just that sort of a regard. He did not like it. Hang the woman! Didn't she know that her daughter, dear and lovely as she was, was doing jolly well for herself in winning him?

Couldn't she see that he was the sort of man who had never lacked for feminine adulation and competition? Was he not a fine product of the race, tall and strong, sound in wind and limb, virile, dominant? Did he not have a mind? Had he not a little money of his own, and was he not in a fair way to have the best practice in Salesby, which the old aristocracy, left over from whaling days, and the new plutocracy, introduced along with the scores of factories which the last quarter of a century had seen erected, had made a town in which it was distinctly worth while to have a practice?

And what was she to treat him with this distance, this covertly implied criticism? She was a woman who had been unable to keep her husband—a failure in woman's first duty! She had been a working woman—one still. He grew impatient. Marcia was all that a man of taste could desire; Marcia's mother was no such addition to his family that she need put on airs.

"Well, Mrs. Bostwick?" he said, smiling at the end of his annoyed reflections.

His voice was gentle, his manner sufficiently deferential. If there was a faint hint of amusement in his eyes and tones, probably that was the mere amusement of all-conquering youth and love, that realize how all the world must fall before them. Mrs. Bostwick yielded the situation with a sigh.

"I hope you will make her happy, Doctor Bristow," she said. "Even if I did not approve of her choice—and believe me, I am very far from saying that—I know that I could interpose no objection weighty enough to deter either of you. I, too, have been young. I know. But—the Lawrences vouch for you, Doctor Greenfield vouched for you, my little daughter's trust and affection vouch for you, and—you will allow me to say it—so does your own appearance. If I had been choosing

for her, I should have chosen another sort of man, I am free to confess; you are ambitious, vigorous. I dare say you lack the intuitions, the sympathies, possibly even the ideals, which men of a less robust type sometimes feel; and I have always thought that Marcia would need a husband of intuitions and sympathies to make her happy. But still—"

"I'm not much of a daydreamer, that's true," replied the young man, "but I hope you won't find me totally without sensibilities. Marcia seems to think that we understand each other very well."

"Oh, Marcia!" A faint smile brightened Mrs. Bostwick's stern face for a second. "At this stage of the game neither you nor she is capable of forming a judgment on any subject. However—"

"And how soon may we be married?" Joy tingled through his veins to utter the words. He felt his possessive arms already about the slender form of the girl. His eyes were bright with happy anticipations as he waited the mother's answer.

"In the spring, perhaps," she said.

"Oh, Mrs. Bostwick, why should we wait? What is there to do? We are not to have a fashionable wedding, Marcia is not to have a fashionable trousseau. Why can't we be quietly married in—say a month—or two?" he hastily amended, as he caught the expression of her eyes. "We love each other. Why should we wait?"

"Marcia and I love each other," replied the woman. "Or so I have believed. I should like to have my daughter yet a little longer."

"Dear lady," Doctor Bristow reassured her in easy phrase, "you will not lose your daughter when she marries. Let us hope that you will rather come in time to think you have gained a son."

Mrs. Bostwick smiled a trifle satirically.

"Let us hope so," she said dryly. "But, meantime, I should like to make sure of the other. I should like to have my daughter to myself for a little while."

"And yet," said the young man, looking at her half reproachfully, "you do not look like a selfish woman. You do not look like a woman who would stand in the way of her daughter's happiness, even for a little while."

"You are an amazingly frank egotist, Doctor Bristow," retorted Mrs. Bostwick, with a faint flush under her dully sallow cheek. "Amazingly frank! Are you so sure that the delay of her marriage to you for a few months would be unhappiness to Marcia?"

"My dear Mrs. Bostwick, you are an experienced woman. Do you pretend to believe that there is any happiness in the world like that of the normal, full life of the well-mated man and woman, any companionship so satisfying?"

"I concede that there is no happiness so complete as that of two high-minded, sympathetic souls who live in daily companionship, loving each other. I do not believe that that happiness exists in one marriage out of ten—out of fifty! Neither the man nor the woman is capable of it! And where that sort of happiness is lacking in marriage, then I say that there are thousands of joys as great in the world—delicate and noble joys. I do not expect Marcia to be unhappy if her marriage is deferred a few weeks. I do not want her to be rushed headlong into a new state. I shan't consent to her marrying before spring—at least, I do not think that I shall."

"Dear Mrs. Bostwick, if you knew the dreariness of my lodgings with Mrs. Rantoul!"

"Oh!"

"Now you see the black selfishness of my heart, don't you? Well, I am selfish. I want my home, I want my wife, I want Marcia! There is everything on my side—our love for each other, the absolute lack of any reason for delay, and the distinct benefit that it will be to me in my profession to be properly established in the town. You know that all people trust a married physician more than they do an unmarried one. You will not lose a particle of Marcia—she adores you, as of course you know very well. There is nothing that can

ever happen to her that will take her away from you. You yourself——"

"Mine is the last case in the world to quote to me, Doctor Bristow, as a precedent," Mrs. Bostwick interrupted him, the dull flush again upon her face. "You know the dreary failure of my married life. It is true that I was impetuous in marrying; but that cured me of impetuosity."

"I knew that you had not been happy," he replied, with an air of respectful sympathy. "But still, you remember what you wanted before—your disillusionment?"

"Marcia has told you all about my marriage and divorce?" asked Mrs. Bostwick abruptly.

"No. She spoke of your life once—with deep feeling. But it distressed her. I would not let her go on. I had heard the outlines of the story from the Lawrences."

"I was younger than Marcia is when I met and fell in love with her father," she said shortly. "I should like you to hear the tale once from me. My father and mother did not approve of him as a suitor. Those are their portraits," she nodded to two commonplace oil paintings hanging opposite the mantelshelf. "Marcia is like my mother. However, their disapproval did not have any weight with me. I badgered them into consenting to my marriage. We were married, and went to New York, where Mr. Bostwick's business was."

"I was soon excessively wretched. He was what is known as a pleasure lover; he drank too much, he played cards too much, and he was utterly unable to resist flirting with any creature cast in the mold of woman. I lived in a fever of humiliation. I tried to hide it from every one. I was very proud. I gave no hint of my disillusionment in my letters home—that is, no spoken hint. If the absence of any spontaneous expression of happiness meant anything to them, they must have known that I was miserable."

"Marcia was born when I had been away two years from Salesby. I cannot tell you how miserable I was. We were in debt, I was continually pestered

by petty creditors. It was horrible. I think I was the first member of my family for generations to have to endure that particular form of shame and torture. I knew no way of making money. I could not appeal to my own people without revealing my condition; and, besides, they had no money wherewith to help me. This house my father owned, and he had a small salary as librarian in the Historical Rooms. But he had nothing that could mitigate my financial troubles. I honestly think I suffered more under them than under my husband's flagrant neglect.

"We seldom quarreled. I am a woman of comparatively few words, and I have a streak of New England fatalism in me. And he hated anything disagreeable. He was always charming in his manners to me—when he happened to be at home. I grew to despise him for his silly amours. I didn't consider him capable of a really forceful crime—he seemed merely an objectionable, weak philanderer.

"Well, I did him an injustice. When Marcia was two years old he eloped with a girl whom I knew better than any one else in New York, as I thought—a girl on whose friendship I had relied a little at times."

"Brute!" ejaculated the doctor.

"I dare say. Yet—except for the wound which the woman gave me by her deceit—I was happier than I had been for a long time. I wrote to my parents, and they urged me to come home with the baby. I obtained a divorce in due time. At home, the town had changed. It was no longer a New England coast town, with musty recollections of the China trade in all the old parlors, but a hustling new manufacturing place. I knew how to cook, although I didn't know much else. I saw that there was a large class of



The long, drab portières at the back of the room parted, and Mrs. Bostwick stood before him.

mill operatives whose wives worked, and who must need some sort of a place in which to buy prepared food. I opened a little one-storied establishment down near Hadley's Mills, where I advertised fresh rolls could be obtained from five to six each evening, and pots of baked beans on Saturday afternoons.

"And soon I had to enlarge my plant. I made other dishes—cheap dishes. Chowder came on Friday, a goulash on Thursday, tripe and onions on Wednesday—and so on. I had no helpers for years. Although I made my living, and Marcia's, and got that hideous bunch of debts we had left behind us in New York wiped out, it was years and years before I was able to lay anything aside.

"That hard work—and Marcia—saved my character. My matrimonial experience had hardened and soured me terribly. I am not a soft person yet," she added, with a smile, "but at least I am not the bitter monomaniac I was in a fair way to become."

"My father and mother died when I had been back a little while—three or four years. We have lived very much to ourselves, Marcia and I. Salesby—the old Salesby that I used to know in my girlhood—was not given to much idle interchanging of visits. And the new Salesby and I never became much acquainted, except in a business way. We have led rather a lonely life, Marcia and I. I wish she had seen more of the world."

"She and I are going to see the world together," declared Doctor Bristow. Then he added, as a graceful afterthought: "And you with us. We are going to make up to you for the unhappiness in your past. And you are not to work so hard any longer."

"Not work so hard!" Mrs. Bostwick was palpably startled. "What do you mean?"

"You will not have to keep up the shop any longer—the—what do you call it?—the cookery."

"Why should I give it up, pray?" Her tone was challenging.

The young man found it difficult to reply that he objected to having his mother-in-law engaged in the useful occupation of supplying mill hands with food.

"Why should you work so hard," he evaded the truth, "when there is no necessity of it? I know that you have saved and invested something in all these years——"

"A very little. But, anyway, why should an able-bodied, intelligent woman who is not yet decrepit give up her business, her occupation, her excuse for existence?"

"I shall not let you say that baked beans and brown bread are your excuse for existence," he assured her gallantly. "The happiness of your daughter—of your children—is your excuse for existence."

She looked at him with no responsive smile on her dark face.

"That is a doctrine which I hate," she told him coldly. "It is the doctrine responsible for half the misery in the world—for more than half the misery of women. They are taught it from infancy—that their one excuse for being is somebody else's happiness. Their excuse for being is the same as man's; it is their usefulness to the society in which they find themselves—a usefulness which may or may not depend upon the happiness they confer and receive. Love—making some one happy—finding contentment in that and that alone—that is the toy that is dangled before the eyes of girls from their cradles. No wonder they are constantly going to wreck in one way and another."

"But Marcia has had other ideals held before her, Doctor Bristow. I have endeavored to teach her that love is not the greatest thing in a woman's life, any more than it is in a man's; that usefulness, loyalty, are the greatest things in the lives of both, and that love is the flowering of the plant, but not the plant itself."

She finished with a somberly defiant look at him. In reply he smiled, broadly, delightedly, upon her.

"And I am afraid that nature, in a month, has undone the teaching of twenty-two years, Mrs. Bostwick. But we have gotten away from our subject, which was your continuing to work so hard—so unnecessarily hard. Of course, you wouldn't be idle, even if you gave up your business. You couldn't be idle in Salesby. Think of all the philanthropic work there is to do, not to mention more agreeable social employment."

"Philanthropy, as you speak of it, is a makeshift interest for idle women. I prefer a genuine occupation. Really, Doctor Bristow, I am a little surprised that a man who knows the satisfaction of work should suggest to any one less than an octogenarian that she should give up work. But I am sure you meant the suggestion kindly, and we will say no more about it."

A deeper red stung the doctor's tanned and ruddy face. She was intolerable, he felt, with her theories, her downrightness, her uncompromising views. Through some undercurrent of his mind ran the question whether or not he would have fallen in love with Marcia, had he seen her mother first. But the mere thought of Marcia restored his temper, sent a little song singing through his veins, banished all care and criticism of her amazing parent.

Besides, once they were married, he would insist upon Marcia's making Mrs. Bostwick see reason, see that it was unseemly for her, mother-in-law to the prosperous and prospering young physician of fashionable Salesby, to supply the most unfashionable part of Salesby with cooked food—for a price. She must be made to see that! Then she could let the big, square house in which she and her daughter had lived, and could subsist pleasantly in a boarding house on the rents and the income from her small investments. Meantime nothing could be gained by further discussion of the matter.

He took his leave of her in a few minutes, paying her some gracious compliment, which she received callously enough, as he departed. In spite of all her firm talk, of all her unyielding manner, he was sure that Marcia could rule her. And he knew, with exultant joy, that he could rule Marcia. She, in spite of this remarkable woman who had borne and trained her, was all that was shy, sweet, subservient, adorably feminine. In all the sensations which he had crowded into his twenty-seven years, there had never before been one so strong, so rapturous, so thrilling, as the one with which Marcia's mere presence filled him. His whole nature called to her compellingly; and how she came—waveringly, tremulously at first—and then straight, straight like a homing dove to its own nest! Marcia was his, Marcia should long for their speedy marriage as intensely as he did, she should persuade her mother to consent to it; in another month—in two at most—he should possess her forever!

The lover's rhapsody in his heart had

sent him hurrying through the Salesby streets at a rapid pace. But it had not made him uncertain of his destination. He entered a real-estate office on the main street, and in half an hour he had signed the lease of a house on the Hill where the wealthy dwelt.

"When will you want to select the new papers and decorations, Doctor Bristow?" asked the agent, blotting the signatures. "We can send our man out with you to-morrow morning."

Doctor Bristow smiled.

"I shall not select them unaided, Bailie," he said genially. "And Miss Bostwick, who is going to help me, won't be in town until next week."

"Ah! I see! Congratulations, doctor! I don't have the pleasure of Miss Bostwick's acquaintance myself, but I know her by sight, and my youngest girl went to school with her. A very sweet girl, a lovely girl! Congratulations!"

"Thank you, Bailie. I think I am a pretty lucky fellow."

"And you're making no mistake to settle out there on the Hill, let me tell you. A very agreeable little colony it is out there. It is some ways from Mrs. Bostwick's house, but not so far, with the trolley, after all. I'm sure your lady will enjoy it. There's considerable of ground around the cottage, if she's fond of gardening. And there's a perfect little bijou of a conservatory—unless you should want to take that for an operating room. It's got a fine light."

"Oh, I shall keep my offices in Henley's Block. I don't believe in the old-school physician's way of spreading his profession all over his house. I've dined in houses where there was the flavor of carbolic in all the sauces. I don't care for that sort of thing myself."

"The new style's a lot better," agreed Mr. Bailie cordially. "It's a durned sight better for us agents—we rent two establishments to you doctors now, where we used to rent only one. The old fellows weren't generally able to do the thing on the same scale as you young men seem to be doing it."

"It pays in the long run," said the doctor.

"Yep, it does. Nothing succeeds like success, and its appearance. Good day to you, doctor, and good luck!"

Outside the office, Doctor Bristow looked at his watch, swung upon a passing trolley, and was borne swiftly along to the handsome suite of offices in Henley's Block which had been such a surprise to Doctor Greenfield's old patients, accustomed as they were to sitting in the long hall of Doctor Greenfield's house, across the street, and waiting their turn for admission to the room, which Mrs. Greenfield always regretfully saw as a sitting room wrested from its proper use, and her husband as an inadequate consulting room frequently usurped by the women of his family for lounging and talking.

Such of Doctor Greenfield's patients as had gone over to the newcomer had come to like the change. The waiting room, with its padded chairs and sofas, its tables full of magazines and books, was a more comfortable place in which to wait one's turn than the drafty hall of the old house, with its long settee and its dim light. The spick-and-span newness of this place, its brightness, its pleasantly businesslike air that seemed to assure a cure in the most direct and businesslike way, were cheering. And the handsome young physician, fairly radiating health, success, virility, was in himself an invigorating influence. Loring Bristow had prospered in the new offices, and had justified their expensiveness.

He went in now, pausing for a moment to look over the list of telephone messages which his stenographer handed him. She was a drab, adoring spinster of forty—he had decided at the very outset of his career that it should not be in the persons of his feminine employees that he would gratify his taste for charming women. Miss Teitelbaum was most respectably plain. So was Mrs. Howser, his trained nurse. She, to be sure, having been a nurse longer than he had been a doctor, held his professional opinions in some contempt, and felt the injustice which

forced her to obey his directions instead of originating treatment of her own.

She had occasionally speculated upon the kind of woman he would marry; she supposed it would be some dashing girl, or some wealthy girl, or some girl who happily combined the two attributes; she had occasionally felt that it would be better for him to marry a woman who understood more of his profession—another doctor, perhaps—or perhaps a nurse. But nothing in Doctor Bristow's manner had ever led her to pursue this line of thought to a joyous conclusion.

He made some appointments, saw a belated patient or two, and then, in his own office, he began a letter to Marcia.

DEAREST AND SWEETEST: Our house is taken. In two months at the longest we shall be in it together, with all the world shut out. No, Marcia, your mother has not said so—yet; and you must come home at once, and tell her that we cannot wait until spring to go through the door of that house together and turn the key upon all the world. She will listen to you. Who wouldn't listen to Marcia? She won't to me. But one thing I assure you, dearest, if she doesn't consent to let us marry in October, I shall come some night on my coal-black steed, and climb to your lattice window, and snatch you from your prayers or your dreams, and fling you across my coal-black charger, and ride away, and away, and away with you!

You may put it to your mother whether she would prefer that to letting us be married decorously and respectably in—say four weeks. I can't wait any longer. Our house is engaged—it will be a wicked waste of rent not to occupy it. And Mrs. Rantoul's meals are surely engendering a dyspepsia in me; I need a new housekeeper and a new cook. That is really why I want to marry you—of course, you realize that?

Oh, Marcia, when I think of you, I can scarcely keep myself here where I belong in Salesby, prescribing sugar and water for hypochondriacs. I want to come back to you so, and be with you beside our glorious autumn sea. I see you walking along the beaches, silent and swift like the little waves, I see you lying against the cliff, the salt spray kissing your cheek. I want to kiss your cheek, Marcia! Come home to me—

"Mrs. Chisholm on the telephone, Doctor Bristow," announced Miss Teitelbaum.

Doctor Bristow frowned. "Oh, connect her," he said impatiently.

It was annoying to be interrupted in this intoxication of love by a trying old woman who was so abominably healthy that no one would ever make a cent out of her. But Mrs. Chisholm was the autocrat of Salesby society; he had to obey her commands, or thought he had.

She told him now that she was bored with existence, and that she desired his presence at dinner to amuse her.

"Tell me about that devoted couple, the Lawrences. I hear you have been visiting them at Kennebunk. How you could endure a month of their saccharine society! Oh, you were with them only a week? Where were you the rest of the time? Who are the Greeleys? New York? I never heard of them. Well, come, anyway, and tell me all about what you've been doing. There's nobody fit to speak to in Salesby at this season except you—that's not much of a compliment, so you needn't thank me. I think I have a wife for you—plain, but lots of money and average good sense. What? *What? Who?* Loring Bristow, tell me this moment who it is."

"Not until I see you at dinner," he replied, laughing. "Good-by."

He hung up the receiver. He wondered a little how Mrs. Chisholm would take his engagement to Marcia—she was an unreasonable old party, who was always taking people up and dropping them again. Perhaps she would drop him now; somehow, he couldn't picture old Mrs. Chisholm—hard, worldly, spicy—getting on very well with Marcia. However, perhaps she—Mrs. Chisholm—had already been of as much use to him as she could be! He turned back to his desk, closed his letter to Marcia, and left the office.

CHAPTER II.

"Marcia, there is one thing which we must do immediately when we get home," remarked Marcia's husband, laying down a letter he had been reading.

They were honeymooning in Wash-

ington. It was, after all, only late October, for Doctor Bristow's plans had not miscarried; he had persuaded Marcia to a prompt marriage, and Marcia, rather by the tremulous beauty of her smile, the wistfulness of her eyes, than by any argument, had persuaded her mother to consent.

Marcia was standing in the curved embrasure of the window of their sitting room, looking down with pleased eyes upon the scene below. The hotel faced one of Washington's little parks; about its central fountain, still sending a summerlike spray of rainbow into the air, a border of scarlet sage blazed; the leaves were thinned on the trees, and the substantial, dignified houses that fronted the park on the other three sides were plain to be seen through the sparse yellow-gold of the maple branches. Children played in the paths; the statue of the national hero who gave the square its name was visible with a wreath of laurel laid at his feet, the tribute of some anniversary procession yesterday. A blue sky, its brilliancy faintly toned as though by a mere hint of Indian-summer mist, arched the scene.

Marcia turned from it at her husband's words, and crossed the room to the table where he sat. Her gray eyes were shining, and a delicate rose color touched her pale cheeks. She moved with a certain quiet dignity, and there was an effect about her of shyness and purity, coupled with a larger quality—nobility, responsibility.

"What must we do, dear, when we get home?" she asked.

She dropped down in a chair opposite him. Her look was a caress, but it was not sufficient for him. He delayed to talk about the duties confronting their return to upbraid her lovingly.

"You're a strange girl, Marcia. I can no more pass you without touching your pretty hair, or your dear shoulder, or stooping to kiss you, than I can fly. But you can pass me a dozen times an hour without the slightest impulse toward affection, apparently. You've got to reform, madam."

Marcia blushed a little painfully. "Because I'm not demonstrative doesn't mean that I—I don't care," she faltered. "But—I simply wasn't brought up that way, and I haven't learned—yet."

"How your mother ever kept from telling you every hour what a pearl of girls you were, I don't see! It's about your mother I wanted to say something. You must persuade her to give up that cookshop of hers."

Marcia's eyes widened.

"But, Loring, dear, why should she? She's a young woman yet—a strong, young woman, not forty-five! She wouldn't hear of such a thing as giving it up for a quarter of a century yet—not if I know her!"

"It isn't merely on account of her health," explained Doctor Bristow. "It's the look of the thing—don't you see?"

"I don't think I do," answered Marcia very gently. There was a slight hint of impatience in the glance her husband flashed upon her.

"I mean the social look of the thing," he explained brusquely. "It doesn't look well for the mother-in-law of a prosperous young doctor, a fashionable young doctor, if you'll accept the term, to be earning her living in any such way. Of course, if she painted pictures or sculpted statues, or wrote, or did anything that the populace could be induced to call an art, it would be different. An artist is permitted to labor without social stigma. But there's no art in cooking bread and roasting spare-ribs, or whatever she does; it's a plain, money-making labor, and darned hard work. She's got to give it up."

Marcia listened attentively. Except that she dropped her lids upon her tell-tale eyes at the beginning of his speech, her face betrayed nothing of what she thought. She picked up a letter opener that lay on the table, and fingered it.

"Don't you agree with me?" demanded Loring, when the pause had lasted a few perceptible and embarrassing seconds.

She raised her eyelids and looked at him—something faintly puzzled, faintly

hurt, in the tenderness of her glance. She shook her head.

"I can't see it in that light at all, Loring," she told him gently, her voice seeming to beg his pardon for a judgment differing from his.

He frowned, and picked up the letter he had been reading again.

"It seems to me perfectly simple," he said shortly. "My reputation for success, for generosity, my standing in the community, will suffer if I allow my mother-in-law to work to earn her own living."

"But, my dear Loring, how absurd!" cried Marcia. "My mother has been in the community much longer than you have—she was born in it. She is an individual there, not an appendage to you—to us," she added more kindly. "Why should my marrying you make her willing, in her strength and capacity, to become a parasite upon you?"

"For Heaven's sake, Marcia, don't use the cant expressions of the—the feminists, or whatever they call themselves!"

She flushed, and was silent, looking at him with pained, surprised eyes for a second. He scowled at the letter he still held. Then, rising, he threw it on the table, and, crossing to her, bent and kissed her.

"Don't let's quarrel, sweetheart," he murmured.

She responded swiftly to the caress.

"Oh, I don't want to quarrel, I don't want to!" she cried. She clung to him in a sort of soft panic.

"There, dear and dear," he whispered, punctuating his words with kisses. "Let's send for an auto, and go for a drive, and forget our troubles."

"That will be good," said Marcia. "I'll get my wraps."

"Put on your most resplendent garments, Marcia, and we'll go out to Chevy Chase, and dine there. Howland put me up for the fortnight."

"I haven't anything awfully grand," she paused in the door of the bedroom to remark. "What had I better wear, Loring—my tan pongee or my white serge?"

Loring considered the question care-

fully, and announced a decision in favor of the tan pongee.

"But wear your black hat with it; the black brings out the delicacy of the general effect," he told her seriously.

Marcia laughed.

"I never dreamed I was getting an adviser about dress," she told him, "when you and I were married. It will be a new experience for me. Dear mother never seemed to care what I had on, so long as it was clean and whole."

But there was no answering smile on Loring's face at her reference to her mother.

The evening happened to be delightful. The air was warm, the countryside lovely. The dining room of the clubhouse was gay, and there were some men present whom Loring knew, whom he presented to his wife with the swelling pride of young husbanddom. Marcia, albeit shy and even a little constrained in general company, brightened under the genial influences of the scene, and her husband's friends voted her altogether charming.

As they drove back to the hotel on the square in the radiant light of a full October moon, they told each other how delightful the evening had been, how lovely the scene, how fraught with beauty and joy every moment that they spent together. And Loring ended their antiphonal chant of love and happiness by saying to his bride:

"And you *will* write, won't you, my dearest, to your mother about giving up work?"

It struck a quick chill upon the glow of her spirits; a suspicion, scarcely defined enough for that name, scurried across her mind, could her husband have deliberately planned to win her consent to something in which she did not believe, by feeding her with delicacies, and flatteries, and little pleasures? She shrank from him, from herself for the thought!

"I'll write, if you wish it," she surrendered in a suddenly dull voice. "But I know it will not have the slightest effect—except to hurt my mother's feelings," she ended.

"It will have just the effect we want

if my darling writes it tactfully," Doctor Bristow assured her. "Poor little darling, with a beast of a husband, who persuades her to do things she doesn't like!"

He held her hand closely, and kissed a little fraction of soft flesh below her ear. He felt very gay and triumphant. Adorable being that she was—she would add a zest to all the victories which she would accord him by the very fact of the little, conscientious obstacle at the first!

"How happy we are, how happy we are always going to be!" he said to her more than once as the car whirled them back into town.

He lifted her from it with an exaggerated protection and tenderness which made her shrink a little into herself; she had spoken the truth when she had said that the demonstrative fashion was not the one in which she had been brought up. And then she tried to shake off the slight repugnance to the advertising publicity of it all, and was the more tender to him because she had presumed, in some remote corner of her mind, to question his taste.

Yet, when she waked early in the morning, she found the question—not of his taste, but of his standards, his methods—awake before her. Had he given her a charming evening merely to win his way with her—tried to drug her judgment, as it were, by compliment?

CHAPTER III.

Mrs. Chisholm's place was the great place of Salesby. There were many stately dwellings in the old town, survivals of an elder day, houses whose bricks wore the rich, mellow tint of time, whose great chimneys at either side promised noble fireplaces within, houses whose Georgian woodwork and mahogany doors were famous among the amateurs of ancient architecture. But Mrs. Chisholm, owning such a house, was almost the only proprietor in Salesby who found it happily placed in a veritable park. A high hedge of arborvitæ shut from the gaze of the profane the four or five acres on which



"Oh, I don't want to quarrel, I don't want to!" she cried.

the house stood. The building itself, upon a slight eminence, was visible from the road, at least in its upper stories. A drive lined with immemorial elms approached it from the street. Behind the dark screen of the arborvitæ there were, as the initiated knew, wonders of green lawn, marvels of flower gardens, conservatories, stables, garages, tennis courts, and all the appurtenances of a well-kept estate.

If there was one thing that Old Salesby resented more than another it was that the woman who possessed all this substantial splendor was not native to it, and, frankly, did not particularly care for it. Mrs. Chisholm had been the result of Henry Chisholm's second matrimonial venture. He himself had inherited the old Chisholm property,

the old Chisholm plate, and the old Chisholm portraits. Until he was past sixty, and had presented to Salesby his second choice in brides, the town had never doubted that he had inherited also the old Chisholm temperament—positive, narrow, unimpeachable—Puritan.

It had forgotten or condoned the indiscretion of his first marriage, when he had returned from a Southern visit bringing with him as his wife a charming, delicate, young Southern girl. That, of course, had been an affront to many estimable young women in Salesby who were withering on the parent stem, but it had been forgiven, at any rate after young Mrs. Chisholm's death, which occurred when she had for ten years sought to adapt herself to the requirements of Salesby society. In course of time Old Salesby per-

suaded itself that it had been very fond of the little Virginian, and meant no reproach when it commented upon the strong resemblance borne to her by her little son, Henry, Junior, who had been two years old at the time of her death.

But the second Mrs. Chisholm—outcome of another journey into the world on the part of Mr. Chisholm—that was another matter! There was no striking disparity of age at which Salesby could grumble. The second Mrs. Chisholm was a plump and well-preserved fifty to her husband's sixty. She matched his widowhood with her widowhood.

Salesby dimly struggled with the recollection of a divorce undertaken ten years before, by the gentleman who was then husband to its new inhabitant. He had opportunely passed away before se-

curing his decree, and his widow had inherited much wealth. But even had there been no such half-remembered scandal on which to base its dislike, Salesby would have disliked Mrs. Chisholm just the same.

The lady was overbearing; she treated the traditions of the town with scorn, either good-natured or impatient as her mood happened to be. She intimated—not to say shouted—that Salesby was a benighted, provincial, overgrown little village. She talked freely of London, Vienna, Rome. She was always going to New York to buy her hats, or to see a play, or even to eat her dinner in a garish, noisy restaurant. She dressed with a frank elaboration that Old Salesby called unrefined. She used slang, and on occasions, if that did not seem strong enough, she brought a little profanity to its aid. She ate and drank with positively masculine gusto, she never conciliated any one, and she ended—as people of strong enough character are apt to end—in forcing her community to take her on her own terms; there was never an instant's doubt in the community's mind that she wouldn't care in the least if it didn't take her at all.

Between his first marriage and his second the elder Henry Chisholm had increased his ancestral holdings some twenty or thirty times. Old Salesby, with its legends of colonial greatness, with its pride of birth, its vaunted scorn of mere riches, its duty atmosphere of what it called cultivation and the second Mrs. Chisholm called decay, would have been content peacefully and with dignity to crumble away.

But Old Salesby was built upon a riverside, and the water was useful for turning mill wheels. The Young Salesby of great brick factories, of poor tenements, of strikes, of new riches that built new places, had sprung up during Henry Chisholm's lifetime, and he had profited by the new city's birth. Not only was it his land on which one of the mills was built, but he was the chief owner in the largest manufactory. The substantial wealth which his father had

left him was multiplied many times before the second Mrs. Chisholm came to share it.

By what crafts or what appeal she had won him, Old Salesby always professed itself unable to fathom. Certain commonplace husbands who ventured the suggestion that she was probably the sort of woman old Chisholm really liked—jolly, companionable, "a good fellow"—were severely snubbed for their pains.

But whatever her attraction had been for the descendant of the Puritans, she maintained it to the end. When he died, five years after his marriage to her, it was found that he had left her practically everything that he possessed, almost completely disinheriting his son. To be sure, young Henry had not always had his father's approval; to be sure, they had not always been in unison in their views.

Still, although Harry had been idle instead of diligent as a boy, and although he had taken to art instead of to shoemaking or lawmaking—both professions in good standing in the Chisholm family now—he had not done anything which, in the opinion of Old Salesby, justified his father in practically disinheriting him. What was two thousand dollars a year but practical disinheritance, Old Salesby would like to know.

It would have urged the young artist to contest the will had it been able to obtain his ear. But when his father died he was loafing somewhere in Italy, according to his wont, and there was no one in the town sufficiently intimate to urge him by letter to assert a claim for his right. And, indeed, those of his fellow citizens who knew him at all were tolerably well assured that he would not listen kindly to such advice. As impractical as that little Virginia mother of his, so Old Salesby commented on his disposition.

As for Mrs. Chisholm, she accepted the benefaction of her husband's will quite as a matter of course, and if she knew that half the women in Salesby believed her guilty of some dark wile or cajolery, she did not bother her head about it, but departed cheerfully for

Hawaii to pass the period of her mourning among more congenial surroundings than were hers in her husband's severe old house.

Nowadays she spent a good deal more time in the dull town than she had been used to do. There was not lacking an element of society more congenial to her tastes than the aristocracy of the ancient city had afforded her. The factories, bringing in new people, creating new wealth, had done much to make the place attractive to her.

Old Salesby might gather itself together under its ancestral portraits and around its Mayflower tables, and might declare that the town was becoming vulgarized, flashy, fast, but whatever opprobrious terms were hurled, Mrs. Chisholm found things more and more to her liking.

She was beginning to feel her years, too. They had not been years spent in the conservation of energy, though they had been selfish enough; it was easier for her to try to find her excitement at home now than to travel far afield for it.

When young Doctor Bristow and his bride returned from their honeymoon trip, their first evening was spent at home. That was an evening of almost unalloyed delight to Marcia. The second evening they dined at her mother's gloomy old house, and that was an evening of rather poignant grief. She was face to face with the fact that her mother and her husband were antagonistic. Loyal she put the situation thus to herself rather than saying that Loring was unsympathetic to her mother. But she realized, though perhaps she did not yet declare her realization in set terms, that henceforth all her happy intercourse with her mother must be without her husband's presence.

On the third evening after their return they dined with Mrs. Chisholm, and that was an evening of almost unmitigated pain and panic to the girl. She had had comparatively little social experience, but that which she had was of the Old Salesby sort. At the Lawrences', for example, wealth was always subordinated to elegance, to

charm. But here, at Mrs. Chisholm's, the dollar mark was horribly in evidence. The old lady, magnificent in a gown from Paquin, was ablaze with jewels that accentuated all the lusterlessness of her person—diamonds and emeralds whose brilliancy mocked the dullness of her eyes, deep-set in fleshy folds; pearls whose milky sheen derided the yellow, aging skin against which they lay.

The flowers were orchids, imported, as Mrs. Chisholm pleasantly informed them, from Boston, to grace the feast. What was known in Salesby as "the Chisholm gold service" was used. It did not lighten Marcia's sense of oppression when one of the guests whispered to her after dinner that it wasn't really gold at all, but only gold-plated silver. There were some Neapolitan singers, also imported for the occasion, according to the hostess, who came in and sang Italian airs, casting bold glances at the women as they did so.

"I thought I'd do the best I could for you," said Mrs. Chisholm to Marcia after dinner, "though it's not much one can do in a dead-and-alive little hole like this. If I weren't a selfish old woman I'd advise that clever husband of yours to settle somewhere else, in New York or Chicago. But I am a selfish old woman, and I expect to spend most of my declining years here; so I'm very glad that there is a presentable young man on my calling list, and I'll do nothing to risk losing him. Don't you smoke?"

For Marcia had shaken her head at the servant passing cigarettes with the coffee.

Mrs. Chisholm herself smoked, and Marcia felt some youthful constraint in explaining that she did not.

"You'd better learn. You'd better learn to do everything your husband does. Then you can either do it with him, or you have the comfort of the habit in case you don't want to do it with him. Believe me, my dear, men are a selfish lot of beasts, even the best of them—if there are any best—and you can learn a lot about how to be comfortable just by watching them."

Again Marcia was at a horrible loss for words. She had never been versed in the art of badinage, and she saw that serious reply was out of the question. She looked hopelessly from her glittering hostess toward the portières that shut the drawing room off from the hall.

Across that hall was her husband; she heard his laugh even then. She wished that he would come and save her from this terrible old woman. Meanwhile the terrible old woman was none too delicately covering a yawn with a white, bejeweled hand—her hands and arms were still lovely, her only salvage from the wreck of time.

"Do you know Mrs. Tevis? She's another young bride," said Mrs. Chisholm, coming out of her yawn.

Marcia admitted that she did not know Mrs. Tevis, and her hostess summoned that young woman from the corner of a tête-à-tête lounge, where she was listening with a supercilious smile to the law as laid down by a stout, elderly woman of the Old Salesby school.

Mrs. Tevis was distinctly not of that class. She was the wife of a new mill owner, and she was held by Mrs. Chisholm's set to be a very valuable acquisition to local society. She undulated across the room now at her hostess' command, a striking figure in her tight, shimmering reseda-green satin gown. Her very black hair was drawn low across her ears, and knotted on her neck in a style as becoming to her as it would have been unbecoming to any one not boasting a perfect contour of profile.

Marcia did not hail her coming with any sense of relief; she dreaded her, with her beauty, her air of bored sophistication, as much as she did Mrs. Chisholm herself.

"You two young women ought to know each other," declared Mrs. Chisholm. "You're both brides—the only brides in Salesby this winter. You can confide to each other all your troubles with tradesmen and servants, and all your wonderful novel discoveries concerning that strange creature, man.

Only you, my dear Mrs. Tevis, give the impression of having known men even before you were married."

"I ought to know them," said Mrs. Tevis equably, passing over something rather provocative in Mrs. Chisholm's manner. "I lived at home twenty-eight years with a father who contained in one person every foible of his sex, and with three brothers who were variants of their honored sire. Then I was engaged five times—let me see, I think it was five"—she blew a perfect ring of smoke from her lips, and dreamily watched it ascend—"well, five or six times. Somehow my excellent Arthur seems very simple to me now—positively primer reading. I hope, for the sake of domestic concord, that you, Mrs. Bristow, entered the matrimonial game nearly as well equipped?"

Marcia's face was burning. She tried to tell herself that Mrs. Tevis was making jokes—very bad jokes, she thought. But if this were humor, she did not know the humorous retort. And if it were not a jest, certainly she did not know the serious reply. She summoned some sort of a smile to her lips, and shook her head.

"No?" Mrs. Tevis regarded her half pityingly. "Well, Doctor Bristow looks to me as though he would be the most indulgent of teachers, the most amiable of antagonists."

"Antagonists?" Marcia faltered, hating the sound of her own voice. "Is it a fight, then, marriage?"

Mrs. Tevis laughed.

"Arthur and I were at drawn swords' point before we ate our first wedding-trip dinner together," she announced pleasantly. "We differed about whether to take a taxi or a horse cab to our hotel. I am glad to see that you have had a more kindly experience. However, I am sure it is a fight, and one cannot enter upon it and decide it too soon. We never discuss whether we shall take horse vehicles or motors now, I assure you. We take motors. I prefer them." She laughed a lazy, impertinent sort of laugh, and blew another ring from her cigarette.

Marcia's yearning eyes, fixed upon

the portières, were rewarded. A servant drew them apart, and the men trooped in from the dining room across the hall. Her heart beat with gratitude. Soon they could go home, away from this garish feast, away from these terrible women. They could go to their own little place, so fresh, so sweet, so dedicated to love. She forgot, in her pressing need of rescue from the discomforts of the moment, the vague fears and premonitions that had haunted her the night before, after her return from her mother's house—her fears of some sort of a spiritual estrangement from her husband.

She was not destined to have her wish for home immediately granted her. At first there was much talk—compliment and persiflage. Mr. Arthur Tevis, who seemed in all conscience easy enough for any intelligent woman to read—a rather stupid, pompous, long-winded, little man—poured some uninteresting information into her ear for ten minutes. She kept looking appealingly toward Loring, but he was laughing and talking, now with this woman, now with that, and never caught her eye at all after the first.

And before she could telegraph to him her burning desire to escape, she saw that he had been captured by Mrs. Chisholm for the bridge tables that were set in the library back of the drawing room. Marcia did not play.

"But you won't grudge your husband to us for just a rubber or two?" said Mrs. Chisholm.

"Oh, no," declared Marcia, although she was on the verge of tears.

Some of the guests departed, and she was left again to the boring attention of Mr. Tevis who declared himself in entire sympathy with her dislike of bridge.

"It isn't that I dislike it," said Marcia. "It's only that I don't understand it. I have never played."

Mr. Tevis assured her that she would dislike it, even if she understood it. He chanted the praises of an old-fashioned game of whist for a while, and Marcia looked at the eager faces bent over the tables in the next room. She thought

of Loring's office hours the next morning; she thought of the possible calls that might have come for him even this evening. She thought of the sick and the lonely, waiting while he played cards in this vulgar woman's house.

A sort of resentment began to burn in her. She was lonely, she was outrageously bored by this wordy, dull person by her side. She had not been two months married—it was not fair! Then she tried to be reasonable; told herself that if she would not learn the ordinary diversions of ordinary society she must not so much resent being left out of them.

A manservant made his way to the table at which Mrs. Chisholm was playing, and respectfully interrupted her. He bore a yellow telegram on a salver. Mrs. Chisholm waved him away.

"At least wait until I'm dunny!" she snapped, and the servant melted away into the shadows for a while. By and by, when her cards were spread on the table, she beckoned him impatiently. She tore the telegram open, and fumbled in her bosom for her lorgnette. Frowning, she read the message.

"Well, here's news, upon my word! My stepson, Harry, whom I haven't laid eyes on since his father's death, seems to have arrived in this country, and he's coming to see me. Too bad he didn't come in time for dinner to-night. I suppose he's a very bad painter—I've not heard of any one's buying his pictures—but he's really quite a delightful fellow."

There were some polite murmurs from her guests, but most of them were too absorbed in their game to care whether Harry Chisholm was coming home or not.

"Let me see that telegram again," remarked Mrs. Chisholm, stretching out her hand. "Why, it's dated yesterday—or," glancing at the clock, "the day before. I see it's past midnight. But he ought to have been here by this time. He said he was coming right away. *Jawkins*—summoning the servant again—"when was this received?"

Jawkins replied almost inaudibly that the telegram had just been delivered



"You two women ought to know each other," declared Mrs. Chisholm.

"Call up the office, and find out why it was delayed twenty-four hours."

"Yes'm," Jawkins murmured respectfully, starting for the door.

Then there was the sound of a bell pealing through the house, and he went to answer that. There was a murmur of voices in the hall, and Jawkins reappeared in the library.

"Well, what is it?" snapped his mistress, arranging her new hand of cards.

"If you please, ma'am," replied Jawkins agitatedly—Jawkins has been in the Chisholm family even longer than

Mrs. Chisholm—"it's the young master; it's Mr. Henry Chisholm, ma'am."

"Harry, my dear, how delightful!" Mrs. Chisholm's voice carried to the hall, but she did not rise or cease to sort her cards. "Come here and say how do you do to your poor stepmother. Your telegram has just preceded you. Jawkins, see that Mr. Chisholm's old rooms are ready for him."

From her corner of the big sofa where she sat, Marcia saw the men in the other room rise as a tall figure crossed the floor, and took Mrs. Chis-

holm's hand. She heard greetings and exclamations—how a train from Boston to Salesby had been delayed for three hours, how not even a bed was to be obtained at Salesby's Parker House, owing to a convention of leather manufacturers then in progress, and how these untoward circumstances had driven him to his stepmother's even at this unseemly hour. He was glad that he was not routing her out of her first sound sleep, anyway. No, he thanked her, he would not have any supper; no, he thanked his old friend, Lynbrook, he would not take that gentleman's hand.

"Well, go in and make yourself agreeable to Mrs. Bristow," said Mrs. Chisholm.

Then she raised her voice, and shouted an introduction. Her stepson crossed the room, and came to the little figure in white in the corner of the yellow-brocaded sofa.

Although Marcia welcomed him with grateful relief, she did not think overwell of his appearance. He walked with a slight limp, and there was no suggestion of great force about his tall, thin frame. He had kind eyes, with a sort of amused question in their depth; she liked their color, too—a keen, dark blue; but he was not a handsome man, not a distinguished-looking man—her eyes traveled suddenly to Loring, big, and blond, and chiseled, in the other room. A throb of wifely vanity beat in her pulses, a little wave of surrendering affection passed over her. Then she looked up into the kind, smiling eyes of the traveler, and she found herself smiling in response.

Mr. Tevis melted away, going into the other room to make the card players nervous, one after the other, by standing behind their chairs and overlooking their cards. And in ten minutes Marcia found herself telling Mrs. Chisholm's stepson about her childish jaunts into the old Merriam Woods. It gave her a warm, befriended feeling to know that they had been a favorite haunt of his boyhood, too, and that he, ten or twelve years before she was born, had known the secret she had thought her own discovery—the secret

of the double blue hepaticas and their hiding place.

It was two o'clock before the scores were all adjusted, and some crisp bills and shining pieces of silver exchanged hands. Once or twice Doctor Bristow had been visited by a momentary compunction in regard to his wife; but, looking into the drawing room, he had seen her, flushed and animated, talking to Henry Chisholm, and had returned to his game with quieted conscience. A slight feeling of annoyance which he had had earlier in the evening, because his wife had not seemed to him to be doing him justice, vanished also.

When he finally pocketed his evening's winnings, and stood up, he felt all his old possessive pride and tenderness in Marcia. She was really most charming, most unusual, most alluring, as she sat there talking with her gentle vivacity to this Chisholm fellow. He had a sudden wave of desire for the quiet of their own home, for the door barred against all the world. He could scarcely bear to wait, even to do justice to Mrs. Chisholm's quails and champagne.

CHAPTER IV.

Mrs. Chisholm did not concern herself seriously with the question of what had brought her stepson home. Had he come five years earlier she might have thought that he was about to contest his father's will, but that possibility was past and gone. Addicted to doing what she pleased herself, it seldom occurred to her to inquire into the motives of other people's actions; everybody did what he wanted to do, or as nearly that as he could. For her part, she thought it poor taste to prefer Salesby to Verona or Perugia, and the Berwick River to the Adriatic Sea. It was only age and its inertia and a canny desire to be on the same side of the ocean where her treasure was that kept her in America. But she didn't quarrel with Harry's tastes. When he told her that he thought of spending the winter not only in his native land but in his native city, she promptly and quite pressingly invited him to stay in his father's house.

"We won't interfere with each other," she told him. "I never allow any one to interfere with me, and there is no labor on earth that I have less of a fancy for than meddling with other people's affairs. Keep your old rooms, and fit yourself up a studio anywhere on the grounds that you please. What are you painting now—portraits? There's a lot of money in portraits if you can only succeed in flattering fashionable women."

Harry shook his head, smiling, to all the propositions. He thanked her for her hospitable intentions, but knew of a little place up in the old Merriam Woods that would just suit him. Davies, the artist, had had it one year; it was equipped with a north light, and it was just about the right size for him and his man, Domenico, who took most admirable care of him. He would still be near enough to drop in on her frequently, and, to tell the truth, he thought he would be more contented up there. As for the portraits, they weren't in his line at all. He was afraid he didn't have the trick of flattering fashionable ladies, and, anyway, he thought he preferred to try to portray the fleeting expressions of a landscape.

"They never make any money until they've been dead fifty years or so, those landscape men," declared Mrs. Chisholm. "But I've always believed in everybody's doing the sort of thing he likes. Why don't you marry some rich girl?"

A little uncomfortable color stung Chisholm's forehead. He was suffering from a miserable attack, not of conscience, but of fright, and any mention of things emotional or matrimonial was distasteful to him. He would never tell any one—he seldom admitted it even to himself—that he was running away from his beloved Italy because the wife of his best friend had flung herself at his head so openly that even his modesty could not misunderstand her. He could never tell any one that Salesby, puritanic and austere where it was beautiful, and grim and forbidding where it was ugly, had suddenly seemed to him an asylum. He wanted nothing

to do with women for a while, wanted no hint of marriage.

"Why should I do that? I've plenty for my modest needs. Domenico is a wonderful manager. I think he's laying up money in the bank for both of us. No, I don't think I want to be a rich and fashionable portrait painter, or to marry me a rich wife. I'm amazingly contented just as I am."

"Suit yourself," shrugged Mrs. Chisholm, whose shrugs were plumper and less graceful than they once had been. "Of course, you know it isn't natural at your age. You ought to have ambition, and you ought to have the ordinary human passions."

"I have an ambition," he told her, laughing. "I have the perfectly absurd and probably quite hopeless ambition to be a good landscape painter."

"Humph! That doesn't dispose of the other charge. Why don't you want a wife? In love with somebody else's?"

The memory of the opulent, Titian-haired beauty who had driven him from Italy rose clearly before him, but he shook his head, and laughed again.

"Not even that," he answered honestly enough; he thanked Heaven that it was an honest answer! His friend Lloyd was such a decent fellow—he thanked Heaven that it was an honest answer!

The rest of Salesby took Mr. Henry Chisholm's settlement in the town of his birth as indifferently as did his stepmother. It was "nice" to have an artist in town, some of the women said—an artist whom one really knew. Of course there were some drawing teachers and the like.

He was promptly invited to several dinners, both in the Old Salesby that his stepmother scorned, and the New Salesby that was so largely her own social creation. As he made no pretense of being about to be a hermit, he accepted such of the invitations as appealed to him, and in a month he and Domenico and the transformed cottage at the edge of the Merriam Woods, a mile out of town, had been accepted and absorbed into the fabric of the community.

Marcia had not known of his settlement in the old town. She and Loring had had rather a sharp disagreement on the subject of Mrs. Chisholm, and when it had passed the Chisholms were, by mutual consent, dropped from their conversations for a while. On the day after the dinner party, Loring had advised his young wife "to follow up the opening" which the dinner had made.

"You will find that she can be more useful to you than any one else in town," he told Marcia.

Marcia flushed. Two things in his speech were offensive to her. She hated this idea of the "usefulness" of friendly intercourse; and she particularly disliked social life, as she had seen it developed at Mrs. Chisholm's. But the desire of the young wife to see her husband's friends from his point of view, was strong in her. She said nothing in answer, and Loring frowned.

"Didn't you like the people there last night?" he asked.

"I didn't have any chance to tell whether I liked them or not," equivocated Marcia. "You don't get at people at a big party of that sort—at least, I don't."

"Of course, the old lady herself is a hideous vulgarian," admitted Loring, with an air of tolerant worldly wisdom. "But she has a good heart"—Marcia flashed a look of unbelief at him as he uttered this banality—"and she has more influence, at any rate, with all the new town, than any one else here. She is so alone, too," he went on hypocritically, "that it would really be a charity on your part to be decent to her."

"Dearest, don't you see that I'm not her sort at all? She would be even more bored with me than I should be disgusted with her, if I set out upon this ingratiating policy. No, I think if you want Mrs. Chisholm's good will, you will do well to keep her and your wife from meeting more often than strict ceremony requires."

Marcia flattered herself that she had spoken with pleasant, wise, impersonal indifference. She was therefore somewhat surprised when her husband turned upon her sharply and said:

"Don't you think that it would be becoming for a young woman of your age to make some concessions to an older one? Are you so sure that your way of doing things, and your taste, and your judgment, are the best in the world? Don't you think that perhaps your husband, who has seen considerably more of the world than you have, my dear"—he tried to interject a note of playfulness into his voice—"may be the best judge of some social matters?"

Marcia had been silent in answer to this. To Loring her silence meant only an obstinate sullenness, but in reality the girl was trying to see the matter as he saw it. She was very honestly in love, even if her love was only the instinctive choice of youth, of young eyes, and of young blood. But along with that youth in her there flowed the stern stream inherited from her mother. As deeply a part of herself as youth, with its yearning and desire, was the austerity which Laura Bostwick's bitter experience of life had made part of herself. When Marcia's husband asked her if it was not possible that her youthful standards were mistaken ones, Marcia tried to examine her conscience, as it were, to see if this indeed were true. And Marcia's husband took the moment's pause to mean that she was angry and obstinate.

In spite of the flash of annoyance that he felt, he gave no further sign of resentment. She was her mother's daughter—that was all! It was fortunate for him that he had married her while she was yet young and malleable. After all, so he reasoned, the girl was pure woman, exquisitely feminine, a being to be molded after the pattern of a man's wishes.

The honeymoon, with its tides of love, of longing, of contentment, had not yet waned enough for him to dread an untoward outcome of his wishes. Under his tutelage, Marcia, the unformed girl, was to develop into something pliable, soft, yielding—made to afford the most delicate satisfaction to all his desires. The joy he took in her now, in the moments when she was all an outreaching tenderness, should be

the permanent feeling of all his days. Such, of course, was the intention of destiny. But meantime it was essential that her mother should be brought to terms.

Not only had Marcia been bred in too honest a fear of her mother to be likely to suggest any change in Mrs. Bostwick's way of life, but she had been bred in too honest a conviction of individual liberty, and of the dignity of labor. As often as Loring returned to the attack upon her, trying to induce her to persuade her mother to give up her way of life, just so often the girl pictured her mother's days as they would be with her business taken from her. She could not compass the vision of the strong, capable, able-bodied woman, reduced to the condition of an elderly lady of leisure, doddering about in one of Salesby's select boarding houses—which was Loring's solution of the problem.

Not only did her imagination fail to grasp such a vision of such a mother, but her sense of justice absolutely denied the reason for such a change. Conscientiously, according to her habit, she examined Loring's claims, and she rejected them. Why should the fact that she, an individual with her own life to live, had fallen in love with this young man—why should that fact rob her mother's days of their dignity, their worth, their purpose? What connection was there between Doctor Loring Bristow's reputation in the community and Mrs. Laura Bostwick's business? The whole thing was absurd, she assured herself, and having come to that conclusion she told her husband that she could not again approach her mother on the subject.

When Marcia made known to Loring the result of her cogitation, she had no serious doubts that he would accept it as she would have accepted a conclusion of his in like circumstances. Of course, people differed in their estimates of advantage and of duty; of course, people held opposite views on many more or less important subjects. But, of course—of course, a thousand times of course—mature people respected one

another's conclusions with the utmost scrupulousness; of course, Loring would respect hers! She took an evening when they were at home, and seemed reasonably secure from interruption to tell him what decision she had reached. It was a long time before she forgot the scene.

The library in their new home was a long, attractive room, lined with low bookshelves, warmed and lighted by a wide fireplace, odorous with blossoming flowers that Marcia, wise in such gentle lore, had coaxed to bloom in mid-winter. The wine-red curtains were drawn across the windows, shutting out a snowy night; the lamps, shaded in some Japanese stuff that diffused a pleasing light, and left no strong impression of their fabric or color, were all aglow; the hickory logs blazed upon the hearth; the fender and andirons and all the brass fittings of the fireplace had come from the attic of Marcia's mother's home; her grandfather and grandmother, her great-grandparents, even, had rested their slippered feet upon those shining rods.

The thought of them, of her forbears, was warm and strong in Marcia's mind as she turned to speak to her husband; she had been thinking of her mother, and not only of all the personal bitterness that the older woman had lived through, but of all the inherited strength and honesty that were hers. She was so near to all her ancestors then that she almost felt them present with her.

Her husband, cheerful and content, leaned back in the armchair already designated his in the household. The day had gone well with him; all of his patients were improving under his regimens, and he had acquired two eminently desirable new ones. It seemed unlikely that anything, in the ordinary course of events, would take him out of his comfortable house that evening. His dinner had been excellent, and the smoking jacket which he had donned on entering the library was not only comfortable, but becoming, as the hall mirror had assured him as he passed.

Marcia was, moreover, her most at-

tractive self, lovely, young, alluring to her slender finger tips, with the subtle lure of exquisite, tender femininity. He had kissed her, in passing her at the library table, and she had blushed as though the kiss were the first one, and she not a five months' bride. That was one of her charms for Loring, for all the surety that he might feel of her love, for all his reliance upon her faith, there would always be about her something untouched, something virginal, to make the last kiss almost as tremulous a joy as the first one.

It was upon this mood of well-being and delight that Marcia chose to break with her announcement in regard to her mother's business.

"Please, Loring," she began, when he had read idly for an hour, interrupting himself now and then with desultory comment on what he read, or with a message to a pestering patient, "you've read *The Scientific Review* quite long enough. I want to talk to you—about something serious!"

"And I want to talk to you about something serious," declared Loring, throwing his magazine upon a sofa opposite. "I want to talk to you on a very serious matter, indeed. Can you tell me the name of the furs which Mrs. Tevis is wearing this winter?"

Marcia looked at him, a little startled.

"The furs that Mrs. Tevis is wearing? Why, I forget—what are they?"

"I don't know their name, but they're extremely pretty. She has one of those close little hats—what do you call them?—toques?—with some gardenias squashed into it, and a big muff and a coat that comes just below her knees. Now, I want you to have one that comes down to your ankles."

He looked at Marcia triumphantly, but she merely gave a frightened little gasp.

"Why, Loring! I remember what Mrs. Tevis' furs are now. They're either mink or such a good imitation of it that an untutored person like your wife could never tell the difference. You couldn't afford such furs for me in a decade. Besides, I'm perfectly

comfortable in my squirrels, and it would be a silly extravagance for me to get any others."

"It would be so far as looks are concerned," her husband assured her gallantly. "But I don't want any bloated mill owners around here thinking that they can dress their pretty poppets better than I can dress mine."

"You ridiculous boy!" Marcia laughed at her husband, not taking him seriously.

"I'm in earnest," he assured her. "You go up to Boston to-morrow, and see what you can get yourself a suit of Russian sables or royal ermine for. Really, Marcia, I want you to have a long fur coat, and one of those squashy little fur hats."

"Nonsense!" said Marcia vigorously, dismissing the notion. "You'll be wanting me to set up a tiara like Mrs. Chisholm's pretty soon!"

"No, we won't enter into competition with the old lady yet. As long as your eyes stay bright you won't have to have diamonds. But while the New England winters remain what they are, it's perfectly legitimate to consider furs. But what was it you wanted to be serious about?"

He pulled her down upon the arm of his chair as she stood by the table, looking for something in her workbasket. The ready blush rewarded him.

"I wanted to speak to you about mother—about what you wanted me to do," she answered, slipping from his arm and seating herself in her own chair opposite him again.

A slight hardening passed over his face.

"Well?" he said abruptly.

Somewhat his tone struck to her heart with the chill that she had already felt in three or four interviews during her married life.

"I have decided that I can't do what you want me to do," she told him. "I see how mother feels about it, and I can't try to persuade her any more. It isn't as though she were old, or weak, or ailing. It would be cruel to deprive her of her work, of her interest."

She raised her eyes to his at the close

of her little speech, and a stranger, utterly unlike the ease-loving husband of the minute before, looked sternly back at her.

"If your mother were a normal woman," said the stranger coldly, "her interest in life would be in her children—in her daughter and her daughter's husband."

"You know mother doesn't look at women's lives in just that way," said Marcia gently. "She has always felt that each one of us, each woman as well as each man, must stand upon her own feet. I think nothing else makes her quite so angry as that theory of the subordination of women to their domestic relations. You see," she ended, half-apologetically, for Loring's coldness showed no sign of thawing, "she would have had such a lost and aimless life if there had been nothing but the domestic relations for her."

"Because she has had an abnormal experience, she should not try to inflict an abnormal philosophy on the world. You don't know how it offends me, Marcia, to hear the language of the feminist on your lips. They were made"—he leaned toward her to illustrate his remark—"for something better than strong-minded theories."

But his kiss did not banish Marcia's expression of slightly combative disagreement.

"Well, anyway," she announced, "I don't feel that it is possible for me to try to persuade mother. I agree with



"Good morning, Mrs. Brietow," he cried gayly.

her, you see," she added honestly. "I don't want you to think that it's just because I realize how useless it would be that I don't even try; it is because I feel that she has a right to her own existence, her own way of existence—and all the more now that she has lost me."

There was silence in the warm, softly lighted room. Loring reached for his discarded magazine, his brow portentous with anger. Marcia looked at him, awaiting some syllable of understanding. For a few seconds the silence was unbroken. Then her husband spoke.

"Your mother's daughter," he observed icily, "will, of course, do exactly as she pleases. She will put aside the

question of her husband's wishes, and the question of her husband's reputation."

A hurt crimson stung Marcia's cheeks and forehead. Her eyes flashed with tears, partly angry, partly sorrowful. She picked up a book from the table, and opened it at random; the tears that did not fall magnified the letters on the page grotesquely. By and by she dashed them from her eyes.

"I'm sorry, Loring," she said penitently. "I wish we could see everything exactly alike; but I promise you that when you don't see things as I would like you to, I shall respect your judgment."

Loring smiled satirically. "That's awfully good of you," he told her, with a sneer. "It's a great concession."

Her olive branch being returned to her in this fashion, there was nothing left for Marcia to do but to fasten her attention upon the swimming letters of the page before her. In a few minutes the telephone rang, and her husband answered it. The clock on the mantel behind him rang nine as he took up the receiver.

"Yes, this is Doctor Bristow's house; this is Doctor Bristow speaking. Oh, good evening, Mrs. Tevis. That sounds very pleasant. I'm afraid I won't be able to come; you know she doesn't play bridge. Why, of course, I shall be delighted to come and help you out. Yes, it is awkward. I will, indeed."

He turned to his wife. "Mrs. Tevis sends you her regards—she wanted us to come and take two vacant places at her bridge club to-night. Of course, I told her you didn't play, and she has some one that she can fill in with. I'll go help her out for an hour or so."

He scrupulously avoided meeting Marcia's eyes as he turned from the telephone, and moved toward the stairs; but he need scarcely have troubled to avoid her glance, for that was bent upon her book, not in sullenness, but in wounded misery that she did not wish him to see. The first time a young husband leaves his home, bent on finding his pleasure alone, is never a happy occasion in a home, but Marcia's pain

was deeper than the average young wife's.

Before Loring left the house, he came, with some compunction, back to her, and, bending, kissed her.

"You won't wait up, will you?"

"No," answered Marcia, struggling to retain command of her voice. "I do feel rather tired, and I think I'll go straight to bed."

"That's a good girl," Loring commended her, much relieved. And not until she had heard the outer door close upon him did Marcia give way to her feelings and sob, not only with the half-childish grief of the moment, but also with the premonition of imminent estrangement.

Of course she was not asleep when Loring returned four hours later. But in the dim light of her room she simulated sleep. She could not have told her reasons—they were partly a weariness that forbade more conversation with him to-night, and partly a hope that he might come, and, thinking her unhappy might kiss her tenderly and entreatingly; might somehow in a caress to the woman asleep and, unrealizing, plead for forgiveness to the waking woman whose ideals of himself he had injured.

But Loring did not come near her bed, and there was something about the little melody which he half hummed and half repressed as he moved about that told her he was not thinking of any hurt to her feelings, or of any revelation of shortcomings in his own character.

She did not fall asleep until nearly morning, and then, being young and healthy, she slept late. When she opened her eyes the full sunlight, bright and crisp, was making the world a jewel of blue and white. Loring was nowhere visible. She hurried through her dressing and ran to the dining room, but he had already gone to his office.

She tried to interpret this as consideration for her welfare; she waited to have the maid tell her that her husband had given fond directions against disturbing her. But the girl, as she waited deftly and pleasantly upon her mistress, said nothing that indicated any

concern on Loring's part. The roseate hope faded as the uneaten meal was served in due form, and finally it perished entirely as Nora remarked:

"The doctor, he had scarcely time for a cup of coffee himself. He just swallowed one standing, and went off. He'll be wanting a hearty lunch."

When Marcia had given orders for the hearty lunch, and had mechanically attended to those household duties which, a few months before, she had performed with a song in her heart, the impulse for solitude was upon her. She wanted to get outside of the four walls of her dwelling, she wanted to get where she could think clearly, unconfused by the thousand reminders of her husband's personality, undistracted by the thousand suggestions of her own daily pursuits. The sparkling world of gold and turquoise and pearl called to her.

She buckled on overshoes which could not quite succeed in making her slender feet unwieldy, she put on a sweater beneath the Norfolk jacket of her old corduroy suit, she jammed a tam-o'-shanter on her head, and set forth for the Merriam Woods.

It was there that she had had the fairest dreams of her young girlhood; it was there that she had often carried her wistful wonder about life. She knew every path, she almost knew every tree—every one of the tall hemlocks, that would be standing straight and black to-day in the midst of the pulsing glory of the sunshine and the snow, the slim birches shivering in their wintry bareness, the oaks with some tough brown leaves still clinging to their branches.

Although all the open spaces of the world were white, yet she knew that there would be only a sifting of snow in the densely protected grove; the ground pine would not be all covered, there would be glimpses of the bright red of partridge berries under their stiff, shining leaves. The air would be free and fragrant—one could think in it! It would not smother one as did this air of her home.

She was very young, she had not yet learned how cruel and impossible were

the sharp-cut standards of extreme youth. Her ideals of marriage, her ideal of her husband, were suffering in the daily life they lived together. She had not yet the bitter, acquiescent wisdom to accept this. She had not yet the sad knowledge which would enable her to place the blame where it belonged—on nature that had made her sweet and outwardly pliable, and had made him as compelling as the sun is compelling to the hepaticas in April.

She, in her young righteousness, her young sternness, must blame one of themselves; and, being as generous as she was young, she tried to take the blame upon her own shoulders. She was childish, she was exigent, she was foolish, so she told herself eagerly. She did not understand masculine nature—and then suddenly across all the excuses that her love tried to make for her husband, the cold, clear light of her own reason would flash, showing her that the excuses were pitifully trumped-up ones indeed.

In spite of her intellectual and emotional perplexities, the keen, sparkling air, the great silence of the woods, did their soothing work with her. Gradually she dismissed from her mind what she was unable to adjust.

There was a high knoll at one side of the woods, surmounted by a great rock. Having climbed upon that rock, one could look out over the tops of the trees to the world beyond—could see a village shining in the sun, and, far away; catch a blue dazzle of the sea. Since the time when she could scramble up this height on all fours, it had been a favorite vantage point of Marcia's. She made for it now, and soon was lying outstretched upon the rock, flushed and panting a little with the exertion of reaching it. Up here there were no perplexities—only the clean, kind winds of heaven and the all-embracing brilliancy of the blue sky.

She was warm with walking and scrambling, and the day was not a bitterly cold one. She did not know how long she had been lying there when she heard the crunch of brush beneath her. It had been long enough to steep

her in the sense of physical well-being that is the gift of exertion in the open air to all the healthy.

She pulled herself straight from her reclining position, and looked in the direction whence came the sounds of approach. She was as unafraid as if she had been a chipmunk peering bright-eyed toward a noise. In a few seconds, her observation was rewarded by sight of Henry Chisholm helping himself upward by a walking stick. Some slight self-consciousness came to her then, when she realized that it was some one she knew breaking upon her privacy. She felt almost as if she bore about herself some advertisement of the cause which had sent her into the woods—some revelation of domestic discord.

But Mr. Chisholm did not seem to see anything of the sort when he raised his eyes from the tip of Marcia's arctics to her face. There had been a half second's perturbation visible when he had first seen the spot tenanted, but that vanished with the knowledge that it was Marcia who was perched upon the top of the rock.

"Good morning, Mrs. Bristow," he cried gayly. "This is luck. I didn't know that you still came to the Merriam Woods."

"I don't very often," replied Marcia honestly. "I haven't been before since—why, since I was engaged," she finished, with a slight accent of surprise for the length of time she had remained away from her haunt.

Chisholm darted a quick look at her.

"There's one comfort," he remarked, dropping down beside her, "a wood is a friend that waits for one. It forgives neglect, and has the same smile of welcome whether one has stayed away from it a day or a decade. I suppose it knows that one will always come back to it in time of need—indeed, much earlier," he ended hastily. Distinctly, he was not talking tactfully to hint to a bride of a few months that she was already finding need of any friendships.

"You're living here now, aren't you?" asked Marcia. "You've taken up your

abode with your friend." She smiled as she kept on with his figure.

"Yes, in the cottage on the other side. I often come over here, however, for the view across that stretch of country and the marshes to the sea. I wanted to see it this morning after last night's snow."

He looked away across the wide-spread vista, and Marcia's eyes followed his. She was warmed and soothed by his presence. There was something gentle, friendly, about the atmosphere that emanated from him. As she followed his eyes and listened to him speak of some strange effect of purple in the water beyond the marshes, she found herself irrelevantly thinking that he was a man toward whom stray dogs and lost children and old beggar women would turn. The features that had seemed to her insignificant the other night looked strong now—not with the chiseled, dominating strength that Loring's had, but with some quiet inner power.

They sat there talking in a desultory way for ten or fifteen minutes. All her miserable confusions of the early morning had melted in the tonic sunshine. Life was simple, if one only had the sense to see it simply. So simple was it that, as they climbed down together toward the level, it suddenly occurred to Marcia that she was very hungry. The spoonful of grapefruit and the cup of coffee on which she had begun her morning's exercise had proved unsustaining.

"I used to carry cookies in my pocket when I came here," she told him, smiling. "But now I haven't any pockets, and I didn't bring anything. I wish I had—the air has made me ravenous."

"If you will do me the honor to look in at my shack, Domenico will have you an omelet and a cup of coffee ready in five minutes. He's a famous cook of the simple sort of food that I like. It would be a pity to undo the good effects of your morning's walk by getting a hungry headache."

Marcia hesitated for a second, but her hesitation was not due to any thought of Mrs. Grundy.

"If you're sure it wouldn't be any trouble," she began doubtfully.

"Trouble! It would be the greatest pleasure. It breaks Domenico's vain old heart that he hasn't been able to show off his skill to any one but me. He's always after me to give a dinner party."

"Well, I am awfully hungry," laughed Marcia, and with this implied acceptance of his invitation they made their way to the cottage.

It was a one-storied affair, built in a sunny clearing. Beyond the space on which it stood it was densely guarded on all sides by the trees, through which a continuous murmur sounded. The house itself was of the simplest construction. There was a big living room with a wide fireplace at one end. At the opposite end a wide-arched opening led into the studio proper. A bedroom of military severity was visible through one door, and through another Domenico's quarters, a small, sunny kitchen with a shed beyond it. The furniture was rude, country-made stuff that consorted well with the stone fireplace and the rough-plastered walls. But there were all sorts of exotic touches, although the usual junk-shop effect of studios was lacking. Marcia uttered a little exclamation of delight.

"What a lovely place!" she cried in trite enough phrase, but with an illuminated face. "Why, here is absolutely everything you really need—fire, books, a piano—do you play?"

"I do, though I suppose I ought to blush to admit it. My father always thought it the most reprehensible of my vices."

He laughed, but he looked at her questioningly notwithstanding. He remembered her big, virile-looking husband—was she the sort of a woman who would decry all tastes in a man that were not somehow inherent in brawn? But her face expressed nothing but pleasure.

Domenico, summoned and instructed as to their needs, welcomed her with dark-eyed delight. He threw more wood upon the blazing fire, and drew a long armchair up close to it. He un-

strapped her overshoes, and treated her altogether with an adoring deference which made her blush. She leaned back against the cushions that they piled behind her and gave herself up to a new form of delight.

She had never been "coddled" within her memory. Petting was unknown in her mother's household, and even Loring's ardent, possessive love-making had not included any particularly soft concern for her comfort.

When in a few minutes, Domenico drew up beside her a small, rough taboret, and placed upon it a tray steaming and aromatic, she fell energetically upon the viands. Her first hunger had just been appeased when there was a jingle of bells in the dark avenue of pines and hemlocks that led to the clearing from the highroad, a quarter of a mile distant.

"You're going to have company," she remarked cheerfully, lifting another mouthful of Domenico's tomato omelet on her fork. There was no awkwardness of self-consciousness in her manner, but Chisholm frowned for an instant.

"It will be the first time since I became a hermit," he answered lightly. "Perhaps the tradesmen are out with sleigh bells to-day. Domenico has found a store or two that consents to deliver out here."

But it was not a tradesman's wagon that drew up before the cottage. It was a sleigh containing his stepmother wrapped in sables as though the weather had been arctic, and beside her, in the furs which had aroused Loring Bristow's competitive spirit, sat Mrs. Tevis.

After the confusion of greetings was over, Marcia found her eyes irresistibly drawn to Irene Tevis'. It was the amused, compelling glance of that lady which had made her own respond.

"You'll do very well, my dear," she announced lightly, but with a meaning that brought the red into Marcia's cheeks, "in that matrimonial game we were speaking of the other night. A card in reserve is a wonderful help!"

Marcia answered nothing. All the

happy ease and spontaneity of the morning had departed. She did not even know how to refuse Mrs. Chisholm's invitation—or rather to disobey her command—to ride home in the sleigh with her.

And half an hour later when the two ladies had satisfied their curiosity about the Sicilian brasses and the hangings from Asia Minor, and had partaken of mid-morning coffee, Marcia was bundled into the vehicle with them, miserably conscious of her shabby, old "tam" and her worn, corduroy suit. It did not lessen her consciousness of these things to find Loring at home, watching from the window when the furred ladies deposited her at her own door.

CHAPTER V.

The winter wore on rather slowly, as is the way with New England winters, and spring and summer passed so quickly that they scarcely seemed to Marcia Bristow to punctuate the sentence of the seasons before the next winter was upon them. Time went, perhaps, a trifle more leadenly with her than with some of the other inhabitants of Salesby. She was learning so much of life and of her husband's nature that it sometimes seemed to her that ten years had passed since the radiant summer, when he had seemed her celestially appointed mate.

The war between her principles of sincerity and directness of action, and his desire for diplomacies, for advancement by indirectness, was constant now. It was temperamentally impossible for her to do as he wished, to make friends where he advised, and to neglect where he commanded. She simply could not do it.

The utmost that she could attain was the gift of keeping silence. She had given up the futile habit of arguing against him. She knew now that he was capable of a certain coarse brutality when he was thwarted, and although her behavior must thwart him, yet she could refrain from adding to her offense by words.

She went to the houses of people

whom she disliked and despised, and among them she won, not undeservedly, the reputation of being "an awful little stick." She had no badinage with which to meet theirs; all her fancies, all her shy gayeties, disappeared in the atmosphere of these houses as inevitably as the first frost blackens shy flowers.

Loring soon had a little coterie of sympathizers, prominent among whom was Irene Tevis. Marcia had but one sympathizer, and his sympathy was of so delicate a sort that she never named it by that name.

Whenever she found Henry Chisholm at any place to which she was dragged by her husband's wish, she was sure of an evening free at least from the acute consciousness that she was not doing Loring justice.

Henry knew how to draw her out without making her feel that he was doing it. Sometimes he had actually succeeded in making her utter a mild sally before half a dozen people. Often—more than that he had kept her from feeling lonely, neglected, a dull wall flower of a woman.

Sometimes he dropped in at the little house which she had furnished so short a time before with love and pride and joy, and had a cup of tea with her before the fire, or brought her a book, or even some treasure from the wood. He had rejoiced Domenico's heart during the first winter by giving a dinner in the cottage at which she, in the not yet worn-out capacity of bride, was the guest of honor. That evening all her native charm reasserted itself. She liked the guests—though Loring afterward called them a set of nobodies, and it was indeed true that none of the new mill fortunes was represented; and in the congenial society, among the congenial surroundings, her girlish capacity for happiness had a brief resurrection.

Loring himself felt the power of it. He saw that other people found her charming; he saw her delicate beauty illumined by pleasure and by a certain shy consciousness of itself. He had testified, when they had returned to their home, to his appreciation of these



"I intend to be the master in my own house. You will get ready at once."

things in the only way he had of testifying to them—by a burst of amorousness like that of his first married days.

Marcia had shuddered internally to find how the mood no longer attracted her; how, instead, it repelled her. Her gradual awakening to the knowledge that these ties of attraction were not, as she had girlishly believed, the material expression of a spiritual fact, had made them lose all potency with her. When Loring's embrace was anything more than the perfunctory greeting or farewell of domesticated man, she loathed it, and she accused herself of wrong because she did so.

She sometimes asked herself ruthlessly if hers was one of those tepid natures that cannot respond to passion, and if she were only masquerading to herself as a woman wounded in a sacred belief; but her own sincerity acquitted her.

She saw a good deal of her mother, although Mrs. Bostwick came seldom to the Hill. But almost every day found Marcia back in the austere old home of her girlhood, found her sitting silent with her austere and silent mother.

What Mrs. Bostwick knew of the disillusion that had begun so early in her daughter's life, Marcia did not try

to guess. They talked little of anything, nothing at all of the great facts of their respective existences. But a new passion of understanding and sympathy bound them to each other, and each knew it. Never by look or word did the mother reproach the daughter for advice disregarded and warnings overridden. She kept silence even on that day when the guard on Marcia's own lips was removed.

It was May, the second May since her marriage, cool, bright, and blossomy. Marcia burst in with a high, unusual color on her cheeks.

"Mother," she said intensely, after the first greetings, "I want your help."

Mrs. Bostwick looked at her, and the expression of her large, fallow face did not change. But its immovability was no sign in Marcia's mind of any lack of responsiveness.

"You know who old Doctor Leary is?" she began abruptly. "No, I don't suppose you do. He was the man who gave Loring his start; it is something he doesn't talk about often. Indeed, he never told me about it but once; that was one night at Kennebunk, just after we were engaged."

She paused and caught her breath, engulfed for the second in the memory of the silvery night when their hearts were open to each other and full only of love. Her mother waited.

"Well," she began again, with a gulp, "Loring was an orphan, you know; he was something like a soda-fountain clerk in a drug store on the East Side of New York. It is one of the things that has made me proud of him—to think that he could make himself what he is from that beginning. Of course, his people had been nice—but you know all about that."

"Well, when he was a boy fourteen or fifteen, rinsing out soda glasses in that shop, Doctor Leary took note of him. Doctor Leary was a shabby old doctor even then, working among the poor on the East Side. But it was he who made Loring go to college and enter the medical school. Why, mother, Loring told me that night—that night—how that poor old doctor, half of whose

practice was charity, anyway, lent him money, let him sleep in a room in his apartment, fed him time and time again, put heart into him, kept him at the thing he had undertaken.

"Of course, after the second year in the medical school, things were not so hard. His uncle, the eccentric one, his mother's brother, turned up with some money. When he died, you remember he left it to Loring. It wasn't too much, but it was enough. Well, he paid the doctor back what money he had had from him, and made him a present of some wonderful instruments he had been wanting, and he sent a child that doctor was interested in to the country."

She dwelt insistently upon the catalogue of her husband's benefactions. "And I suppose men are different from us; but, somehow, he seems to think that that squared him with Doctor Leary."

She fell into a fit of musing. After a minute, she aroused herself again. Her mother was still waiting, watching her with brooding eyes.

"Now he is old, and shabbier and funnier than ever—Doctor Leary, I mean. He's garrulous, and yet he's abrupt—oh, I admit that he is not a credit or an ornament to one's dinner table. But he's come all the way on here just to spend a day or two with Loring. He adores Loring—you see, it's something he feels he has made himself—Loring's cleverness and success. And we're having a dinner to-night to Doctor Conreid and his wife and a lot of people. Loring won't let me ask Doctor Leary. It breaks my heart. That poor old man!" She broke off with a catch in her voice.

Mrs. Bostwick sat silent, still. But her eyes had filled with a sort of tender, passionate pride. This was her true child still! Nevertheless, what she said was:

"Loring is probably right, Marcia. The old doctor might not enjoy himself any more in the company of your great German surgeon than your German surgeon would feel honored by the old doctor's presence. I suppose

that Loring is making it up to Doctor Leary in other ways?"

"There are no other ways!" cried Marcia, with fire. "I tell you, that old man fed him when he was hungry, clothed him when he was naked, housed him when he was roofless! There should never be a moment when Loring's house should be closed to him."

"Aren't you exaggerating a little?"

"Oh, perhaps a little, but the spirit is the same. It doesn't seem to me that I can bear it."

"I can't help you any, Marcia," said her mother abruptly. "I feel as you do, but I think I see Loring's point of view. It is not a vital enough matter—a foolish little dinner party—to make an issue of. Just be as nice to the old man yourself as you can."

"Not a vital issue! What is a vital issue then? If gratitude, if loyalty, if the common decency that makes people want to pay their debts, do not make a vital issue, I should like to know what does."

With the same look of brooding, melancholy pride, Mrs. Bostwick listened to this new Marcia, whom less than two years evolved from the timid girl, full of dreaming fancies. But before they could talk any more on the subject, Henry Chisholm came to call on the elder lady. He was a favorite of hers, as she was of his. Yet she did not seem altogether happy when he left the house with Marcia, and walked away beneath the feathery elms on Main Street. She watched them with anxious eyes as far as she could see them.

After the dinner to the German surgeon, there was a closer understanding yet between Marcia and her mother, just as there was an increased estrangement between Marcia and her husband. Mrs. Bostwick could not bring herself to talk much of her own past, but she talked of her views more than she had ever done before.

Morning after morning, when her household work was done, Marcia used to go back to the gaunt, square-built brick house in the middle of the town, and busy herself with helping her

mother. Loring, of course, knew of her practice and resented it. It was adding insult to injury that his mother-in-law should not only refuse to order her life according to his wishes, but that his wife should aid and abet her not only with moral support, but with the work of her hands. On the rare occasions when he and Mrs. Bostwick met, there was frigid politeness, and nothing more between them.

It was one morning in June that what might be described as the climax in Marcia's filial life came. Her mother had been talking freely, and, to the daughter's mind, sensibly and illuminedly, about the relations of women in the world.

"It's such a wrong system of education," she was saying, "that of girls. They are educated all for love, and what does love amount to in the lives of half of them? A little youthful attraction, a youthful excitement—and then long years of becoming adjusted to the world for which they were not educated. I don't suppose that ten men and women out of every hundred are capable of a great passion, any more than they are capable of painting a great picture or composing a great opera. Yet girls are brought up for the great passion, and for nothing else."

"Of course, it is a little better now than it used to be, but I hope the time will come when it will be much better yet—when they will be educated for themselves and for work in the world. It is that other theory that has made them so disloyal to one another. Some day it will be as impossible for a woman—I mean a woman with no natural criminal impulse—to be false to other women as it would be for her to forge a check. But that time will not be while girls are brought up to think that men are for the world, and they are for men."

Marcia sat drooping forward slightly in a big armchair. The broad brim of a black hat shaded her face, which was pale. She sighed a little.

"I'm afraid that my practice was not equal to my preaching," said Mrs. Bostwick, looking at her attentively.

"But you see, Marcia, my dear, when you were a child I was so busy trying to live down the mistakes in my own upbringing, trying to meet the world on some sort of an equal footing, that I did not have time to put all my educational theories into action."

Without raising her eyes, Marcia answered a little listlessly: "I think you did very well, considering the unpromising material you had to work on. I suppose I'm a reversion to type, am I not?"

Her mother smiled. "You are your grandmother over again," she declared, "the gentlest, most clinging woman that ever believed the whole duty of woman was in loving her husband and keeping him well fed and mended. That is, you are like her in looks. I think you have a little of me—and I was a good deal of my father—in your make-up. Ah, well, we may plan as we please, but those past generations have so much of their will with us. Only—don't be oppressed by the thought of the past when you try to bring up a daughter, Marcia. If you ever have one," she added idly.

The pale face beneath the big black hat was suddenly suffused with color. Then it was buried in Marcia's hands, and the slender shoulders were shaken by sobs.

"Oh, mother, mother!" wailed the girl.

Mrs. Bostwick jumped to her feet.

"What do you mean, Marcia? Is it true—is it——"

"It is, it is," cried Marcia. "And, oh, mother—how can I bear to say it? I dare not let myself think how I shall feel if my baby's nature is like his—Loring's—and not like yours and my own people's!"

The girl's face was still hidden in her hands, and she sobbed half articulately. Her mother stood by her chair, looking down upon her with grave pity. Suddenly a curious pallor passed over her face, and her lips twitched. She caught her side with her hand just as Marcia raised her eyes.

"Why, mother! Is anything the matter? Are you ill or faint?"

For a minute Mrs. Bostwick did not answer, keeping her hand pressed to her side and biting her lips as though in pain. Then her expression cleared.

"It was nothing but a stitch—indigestion, I suppose," she announced. "But, Marcia, my dear—what you have just told me! Remember, you are not fair to your husband when you say such a thing. A man is only half himself until he has children to show what responsibility—real responsibility—will make of him. For Heaven's sake, my daughter, don't be a Pharisee because you and Loring may have happened to differ on a few subjects. And even if you and he never again see in each other what you once thought you saw, even if he is not as strong and as fine as you would have him—why, my dear, you will only have to be strong and fine for both. And remember what I said—look to the future, not to the past."

She touched her daughter's shoulder lightly. It was as near a caress as she ever came. She went out to her office to receive the report of a delivery wagon, and left the girl still sitting in the plain, old room. The doorbell rang, and she heard a halting step cross the hall. It was the tread of her lame friend, Henry Chisholm. She frowned impatiently in the office. She wished that he had not taken to calling upon her at such unseasonable hours. She hoped that Marcia would have pulled herself together before he reached the parlor. She wished, with sudden petulance, that he would go back to his Italy.

In the parlor, Chisholm had paused at sight of Marcia's flurry. It was evident that she had been crying, and her soft hair was disordered.

"I beg your pardon," he began. "Let me find your mother. I—is there anything I can do? Is anything the matter, Mrs. Bristow?"

Marcia struggled for a second to regain control of herself, but without success. The unusual emotional strain under which she was laboring, the unprecedented breaking down of reserve with her mother, had entirely undone her. She tried to smile, but her waver-

ing lips refused to obey her. She burst into a sudden strangling storm of sobs, and rushed out of the room past him.

Her mother, returning more speedily from the office because of her knowledge of her daughter's companion, saw her as she dashed up the stairs. There was a deepening of the look of anxiety in Mrs. Bostwick's plain face. But when she greeted her untimely caller, she met his broken inquiries with sufficient suavity.

"No, I don't think there is anything of moment the matter with Marcia," she told him. "She has been losing sleep lately, and that always develops nerves in women, you know. I," she told her lie unfalteringly, "was the unwitting cause of this outbreak—I criticized her hat!"

She laughed and waited his appreciation of the joke. At any rate, she was telling herself, she would not add to the fire which she believed already kindled in him the fuel of a pity for Marcia and a resentment against her husband.

Mr. Chisholm accepted the explanation perforce. He had come to consult his valued counselor, it seemed, about the advisability of importing Domenico's sister and her brood from Taormina to Salesby. He made no further reference to Marcia, and kept his attention creditably fixed on the domestic problems of his man-of-all work until he was about to take his leave. Then, as he turned to pick up the soft hat he had left upon the table, and his eyes were averted from Mrs. Bostwick's searching ones, he said:

"I hope that Mrs. Bristow will soon recover from her insomnia. I suppose doctors' families are like shoemakers', always in need of the commodity the chief of the clan manufactures. But I wish that Mrs. Bristow could be induced to take medical advice. Insomnia is such a damnable thing, once it gets its clutches on one."

"I think a change of air is all she needs," replied Marcia's mother evenly. "You know they didn't take any holiday last summer. I think I shall try to induce Doctor Bristow to lend her to me for a while this summer."

Something too faint to be called a blush, which had mounted to Chisholm's face as he spoke of Marcia, suddenly faded. Its going left him a little paler than was his wont.

"It would be delightful for both of you," he said. Then he added, apparently forgetful of Domenico's relatives and the degree of permanence their coming implied in his own residence: "I'm thinking of getting away again myself."

"This has been rather a longer stay than you usually make, hasn't it?" inquired his hostess, also politely oblivious of Domenico. "Will you go back to Italy?"

"Probably. But never for so long again. I find that life in the woods suits me very well, and besides"—he laughed—"my native land has new charms for me, now that I've actually sold a few pictures."

"Success does make a pleasant atmosphere through which to view a place," Mrs. Bostwick replied. Her face softened a little. "I don't know that I ever told you how sincerely glad I was over your good luck at the Academy. Even the critics, who usually find the mere fact that a picture is hung in the Academy enough to damn it, united in finding yours good, didn't they? It's very nice. I wish your father might have lived to see the day, and even more that your mother might have."

"Thank you," he answered. "That is the only trouble—there is no one to care very much what I do."

She looked at him understandingly, but made no tritely soothing answer as he limped out.

In spite of the stiffness of muscle which made him a slight cripple, Chisholm was fond of walking. As he struck out now on the five-mile stretch from Salesby's centre to the Merriam Woods, his mind was full of the unspoken things in the conversation which he had just had.

Would Mrs. Bostwick indeed succeed in carrying Marcia away for three or four months? Would Marcia consent to go, and how would the old town seem to him with her slender pres-

ence withdrawn? He did not like to think.

It was indeed time that he should go back to Italy, or go somewhere, or do something, to break the spell which his own kindness of heart and the doubly appealing charm of her loneliness and her personality were weaving for him.

He had cleared the first half of his journey, and was out of the region of close-set houses, when an automobile whizzed by him. He glanced up in time to catch Doctor Bristow's quick salutation and a wave of the hand from his companion. It was—of course, Chisholm told himself—it was Irene Tevis, dark and warm-colored, and full of vivid fascination. Of course.

Chisholm asked himself angrily if Marcia alone, out of all her set in Salesby, was unaware of the flirtation between these two? She had always seemed as celestially ignorant of it as if she dwelt in another world. But her tears that morning—the nervousness of which her mother had spoken—what did they mean but that she had learned what all the rest of the world knew? What did it mean but that she was torturing her pure and devoted heart with the new knowledge? He clenched his nails into his palms with anger. The fuel which Mrs. Bostwick had so carefully refrained from applying was burning briskly in spite of her.

CHAPTER VI.

"I wish you would treat Mrs. Tevis with more cordiality, Marcia," declared Doctor Bristow. "You have declined two invitations from her in the last month. You must not decline this one to her garden party."

"I really don't see that it matters, Loring," answered Marcia. "Of course, my declining does not restrict you. You like the people you meet there; and my staying away doesn't prevent your going."

"I won't have Mrs. Tevis put in this light," declared Loring, with the air of one delivering an ultimatum. "She's a very hospitable, a very charming, and a very stimulating woman. For you to

continue to refuse her invitations while I accept them would indicate that you had some reason for slighting her—some personal reason. I don't wish any such construction put upon the situation."

Marcia's eyes widened in some surprise.

"Indeed, I do not understand you," she said. "What possible personal reason"—she stressed the adjective slightly—"could I have for disliking Mrs. Tevis?"

Loring flushed, partly in embarrassment, partly in gratified vanity.

"Of course, in reality you could have no reason," he answered rotundly. "But it's a censorious world in which we live, and people might reason that you were—jealous."

They were sitting in Marcia's sunny bedroom, she at her desk, a graceful figure in her thin lilac negligee, and he moving restlessly about the room in which he had sought her on entering the house a few minutes before. She turned and looked at him fully.

"Have I any reason to be jealous of Mrs. Tevis?" she asked him. Her voice was smooth and unruffled, her gaze clear and direct, her soft color undisturbed. It irritated him to see how little even the suggestion of a rival in his affections could stir her.

"Not if you're a sensible woman," he asserted brusquely. "I admire Mrs. Tevis certainly; I find her conversation stimulating intellectually—"

"Intellectually?" pondered Marcia aloud.

"And I've never subscribed to the silly doctrine that a man shuts himself up in a stone cell as far as all the other women in the world are concerned when he marries one of them. Or a woman, either," he added as a generous afterthought. "I never make the least objection to your acquaintance with Chisholm, though what under the sun you see in that lame dauber I don't know."

Marcia flushed a little. It hurt her to have her delicate little friendship with a man who had been so kind to

her bracketed with this unlovely thing that her husband talked about.

"Well, I understand that you want me to go to the garden party so that no one can accuse me of being angry—or having reason to be angry—over your attentions to Mrs. Tevis? Very well. In such a cause——" She yielded the question with a half laugh. There was something sharp and bitter in it—a moment's recognition of the thing her marriage—that fair dream of truly mated souls—had become.

When the day of Mrs. Tevis' *fête champêtre* arrived, however, she did not wish to fulfill her promise. For the first time within her recollection she had that morning found her mother ill. A heart attack, the old family physician had told her, and Marcia was frightened and almost beside herself.

She had hurried to Loring's office, and, finding him in, had entreated him to send to Boston for a specialist, to do any mad and absurd thing. Loring had called up the doctor in attendance on the telephone, and after consulting with him had tried to reassure Marcia. There was nothing to be alarmed about immediately. A sharp attack had yielded for the present to remedies, and there was every likelihood that it would pass. That it denoted something organically wrong with her mother's heart was undeniably true; but Marcia must remember that the victims of heart disease, if they were forewarned of the nature of their malady, always outlived all the rest of their generation; they were able to guard themselves so well against the cause of attacks.

He tried to soothe her kindly, and he was reasonable in his talk, but for once Marcia was unreasonable. She dashed from the office back to her mother's house, and not until Doctor Hobson drove her from the sick room in the middle of the afternoon was she induced to go home. Loring was waiting for her—waiting for her to make ready for Mrs. Tevis' garden party.

She entreated him not to force her to go, and his brow grew heavy with anger.

"This is sheer childishness," he said

roughly. "You can do your mother absolutely no service. You probably excite and harm her more with your hysterical presence than any other thing in the world could harm her. Dress yourself, and show yourself with me at Mrs. Tevis' party. I don't ask it." He had lashed himself into a sort of fury now. "I command it. I've put up with you and your notions—or rather with your mother's notions, for I don't think you capable of evolving many of your own—as long as I intend to. You have consistently tried to thwart me in everything since we were married. You have set up your notions of right against mine, you have set up your tastes against mine, you have not scrupled to doubt my honor; to-day we will begin a new order. I intend to be the master in my own house. You will get ready at once."

She was too unstrung by anxiety to resent his manner, or indeed much to notice it. He was but a large, unpleasant noise beating against her anxiety. She only realized that he was bidding her to do something distasteful instead of allowing her to return to her mother's bedside.

"Oh, please, Loring, please let me go back to mother's. You don't understand. I'm all she has—I'm all she's ever had, I never let her see how much I cared! If she is going"—she steadied herself to say it—"if she is going to die, I want to be with her, letting her feel how much I love her."

"So, now it's your medical opinion that you set up against mine and Doctor Hobson's, is it?" demanded Loring brutally. "Your mother is not going to die, and you are coming to Irene Tevis."

She made some inarticulate protest, but in a few minutes found herself dressing to go with him. Her small face beneath her wide-brimmed hat was set and miserable as they motored toward the Tevis place. She was scarcely able to force a smile of greeting to her lips as she took her hostess' hand. She scarcely knew what she answered to the remarks addressed to her. By and by she saw Henry Chisholm mak-



She looked at him, dazed and stupefied by the hurry of her emotions. And while she looked he kissed her hand.

ing his way toward her, and a great load seemed to slip from her shoulders. Her face lightened pathetically.

"Oh, I'm so glad to see you," she cried. "Isn't there some quiet place where you can take me—away from all this?"

With a tired motion of her head, she indicated the lawn, shadowed with graceful trees, broken with brilliant flower beds, mushroomed by a luxuriant growth of striped marquette tents, alive with moving figures.

His face had brightened at sight of her. Now he looked at her with some anxiety. Her pallor was extreme.

"There's an old arbor down the hill-

side near the river," he told her. "It's some little distance from the canoe landing and comparatively quiet. Shall I take you there?"

"Oh, if you will," murmured Marcia. Unconsciously she took his arm, and leaned upon him as they walked.

"Is anything the matter?" he asked, after a minute or two.

He scarcely dared trust himself to put the question; it seemed to him so amazingly indiscreet. What if it was more than she could bear, this being dragged here to see her husband's flirtation flaunted in her very face? But her answer showed him how far astray his imaginings were.

"It's my mother," she told him. "She has had an attack of heart trouble this morning. It seems

to me I shall go crazy staying here and seeing these foolish people and hearing this foolish music when I want to be there with her."

He managed to soothe her and to reassure her as Loring had not been able to do. He kept her established in the little arbor at the foot of the hill where the sound of the band near the house and the babel of voices around it were borne but faintly. He had even succeeded in making her smile, in bringing a little soft color back to her cheeks, in forcing some bouillon and sandwiches upon her, when they were interrupted. A young man came awkwardly toward them.

"Oh, hello, Chisholm! Howd' do, Mrs. Bristow? Can either of you tell me where Doctor Bristow is?" There was something strained in his manner.

Neither of them could inform him of Doctor Bristow's whereabouts—as a matter of fact, the young physician had lured his hostess away from her post, and was out on the river in a canoe with her at that moment.

"Is some one ill? I mean, is there some message for him?" asked Marcia.

The young gentleman stumbled and contradicted himself once or twice, and made a general mystery of his business.

Then he said:

"Mrs. Bristow, will you excuse Chisholm for a minute? I—the—I think I'll give him the message."

Marcia did not smile at the confused speech. There seemed to be something too foreboding in the confusion to cause a smile. But she bowed, and Chisholm withdrew with the young man.

"You'll have to tell her," began the young man, wiping his forehead; "you'll have to tell her, Chisholm, since we can't find Bristow. The message is really for her—her mother—she's wanted at her mother's."

"Is Mrs. Bostwick worse?"

"I'm afraid she's dead," replied the young man. "Doctor Hobson sent the message. I've been trying to find Bristow—" He wandered off into incoherencies again. "Of course, he ought to be with her; of course, he ought to be the one to break it to her, but I suppose he's off somewhere philandering with Irene Tevis. Well, now, Chisholm," with an air of shifting responsibility, "it's up to you, old man. And you'll be able to do it decently somehow."

"God help her!" said Henry Chisholm.

He found Marcia waiting for him in the arbor with the rambler roses climbing over it. She raised her face to his with a smile.

"What was the portentous message?" she demanded. "Was he looking for some one to break the news to Mrs. Tevis that her ice cream had given out?

Or that the band had struck? Or that—what is the matter?" For his grave face put to sudden flight her strained mood of jesting.

"My dear lady," he began, and even in the surge of anxiety that flooded her being, she was conscious of a new tone in his voice and a new look upon his face, "you can be very brave. I know you can. You must be now."

"My mother?" she faltered.

"You are wanted there immediately. I will take you down. Mrs. Chisholm is here, and I will take her rig."

They climbed the little hill together, and crossed the grounds. It seemed almost as if they were moving in a dream. Such of the gayly dressed crowd as saw them seemed to melt away as the figures in a dream dissolve. The news had spread among the guests at Mrs. Tevis' party that Marcia's mother was dead. The announcement chilled the warm June air, clouded the bright afternoon.

Afterward, Irene Tevis was quite annoyed at the inconsiderate untimeliness of Mrs. Bostwick's demise; she said that it had spoiled her entertainment, but she and Doctor Bristow had agreed that Mrs. Bostwick's forte had never been considerateness.

Henry Chisholm said nothing more to Marcia as they hurried across the grounds toward the stables. He was devoured by pity for her and by a blazing resentment against her husband. He dared not trust himself to speak. Even when they were seated in Mrs. Chisholm's cart, and were being driven back again toward the centre of the town, he did not break his silence. Not until the old house was in sight, and he heard a quivering, strangling sob from Marcia, did any words come to him.

"She was the bravest woman that I ever knew," he said. "You know I was a little boy when she came to Salesby. I remember hearing my elders talk about the tragedy. I went to church the first Sunday she was home, full of curiosity; I think I expected her to do or say something peculiar—I had been taken to the theatre a short time before, and Tragedy wore a distinc-

tive dress to my mind. And I remember that when I came home, I said to my aunt that that woman I had seen couldn't be the one that there was a tragedy about, she was so quiet, and did nothing different from the other people. She was a very courageous woman. I think you are like her."

Marcia raised her anguished eyes.

"Thank you," she said. "I understand. I shall try to be."

When she crossed the familiar threshold, there emerged from the dark, shaded sitting room the figure of a stranger, a man. Marcia looked at him questioningly. His black garb gave no hint to her mind of his profession. But his first words enlightened her. She shrank back with a little cry.

"Oh," she cried, turning instinctively to Henry, "send him away. Oh, send him away. I don't have to do this, do I?"

Henry frowned upon the undertaker. "Doctor Bristow will be here very shortly," he asserted. "Talk to him about these matters." Then he spoke to Marcia. "I shall stay here in case you want me for anything," he told her, and there was a look of gratitude on her stricken face as she climbed the stairs toward her mother's room.

Loring Bristow, landing from the canoe, laughing, flushed, with a victorious air, helped the languorous Mrs. Tevis ashore.

"Every old cat in Salesby will be talking about me," purred the lady gently, "because of this escapade. A hostess to desert her guests!"

"It was worth it, wasn't it?" demanded Loring, neglecting to release her hand.

She made no answer, but flashed a sidelong look at him and neglected to remove her hand.

"Doctor Bristow, sir," began a servant, suddenly appearing from the boat-house, "I beg your pardon, sir, but I have a message for you, if you please, Mrs. Tevis."

The canoers glanced in some surprise at his confusion, Loring looking hastily at his watch.

"Mrs. Bristow, she has gone." Loring frowned darkly, but the man hurried on. "And will you please follow as soon as you can? She has gone to Mrs. Bostwick's."

"Is Mrs. Bostwick worse?"

"She has died, sir," replied the man deferentially.

It was with some remorse, but with more foreboding of a scene, that Loring drove his machine rapidly through the town. Poor Marcia! Poor girl! But in spite of her natural grief, there was no doubt that an antagonistic influence was removed from her husband's path by Mrs. Bostwick's death. He took some credit to himself for saying, in his ten minutes of self-communion, that he wasn't going to be a hypocrite and to pretend to any great sorrow in the news. Of course he was sorry for Marcia—poor girl! But if she was inclined to cut up rough about having been dragged to Irene's garden party when she might have been at her mother's deathbed, why—well, she had better take an opiate to-night, anyway.

He passed Chisholm on guard in the lower hall, pausing for a second to murmur conventional thanks. Marcia was sitting by her mother's bed. She had not been crying, but her face was infinitely worn and white. She said nothing either in greeting or in reproach to him, but he felt her shudder when he put his arms around her and murmured something sympathetic.

After he had talked and made all the necessary arrangements with all the necessary ministrants of woe, he tried to persuade Marcia to go home. Her lips closed in an obstinate line. She refused absolutely, and he found himself unwilling to coerce her.

"This is morbid, dearest," he said glibly. "But I shall not try to persuade you. I have simply got to go myself. There's that case at the hospital at five, and I must go. When I come back, perhaps you will be willing to come home with me. Meantime, if Chisholm has nothing else to do, I'm going to ask him to stay with you. You've given me the full list of your mother's connections?"

Marcia nodded.

He hesitated a minute, a little embarrassed to know what to do next. Then, with a light caress deposited on her soft hair, he went down the stairs. He spoke to Chisholm, and Chisholm, with singular curtness, it seemed to the doctor, agreed to stay until Loring got back from the hospital.

By and by the trained nurse whom Doctor Hobson had sent in led Marcia down the stairs. She brought her into the plain, old sitting room.

"Mr. Chisholm," she said, with professional cheeriness, "I've been trying to persuade Mrs. Bristow to lie down. But she won't; the most that she will do for me is to come and rest on the sofa here. If she needs me——" She broke questioning.

"If she needs you, I will tell you," replied Henry briefly.

He watched her as she tucked Marcia beneath the faded, old afghan, and arranged the sofa cushions beneath her head. A sudden desire surged in him to throw them all aside and to gather the slender girl into his arms, to make her rest her head against his heart, to surround her with warm love. He told himself fiercely that this was not the desire of a lover, but only of a human being with some slight sense of pity in him. Her husband's arms should be about her now, her husband's love should infold her in the sudden loneliness and blankness of the world. He, Henry Chisholm, felt nothing but pity for her forlornness, so he assured himself.

Loring was longer away than he had expected to be. A June thunderstorm came up. When the first flashes of lightning began to play in the room dark with twilight and with drawn blinds, Marcia gave a little frightened cry.

"They were the one thing," she told him, "that she was afraid of—thunderstorms. The only thing in the world. I'm going back to stay with her."

He crossed the room and took her hands.

"You mustn't go up there again," he said. "Not yet. They are still up there

—I hear them moving about. You must stay here."

"I can't," the girl answered, shuddering. "You don't know how she hated lightning, and, oh"—she broke into a sudden storm of sobs—"think of it! Always to be out in the storms! Never to be housed and safe from them again!"

In the sudden tempest of grief and fright in which she was caught, she clung to him, unknowing it. He never knew with what words he managed to soothe her and to change the sobs that tore her into a gentle rain of tears. But when the storm had passed and Loring reappeared, it was to find the stony figure of grief that he had left melted into a human, grieving woman.

CHAPTER VII.

Henry Chisholm had climbed to the top of the big boulder to consider his situation calmly. Since the day of Mrs. Bostwick's death, he had never sought to deny to himself that he was in love with Marcia. His standards were not uncommonly severe; he would have thought himself justified, in view of the fact that her husband was notoriously pursuing another woman, in winning her love, and in forcing a situation which should end in a divorce between the Bristows and his marriage to Marcia; but Marcia herself prevented.

There was something so delicately pure, so high and fine about her as he conceived of her, that what he considered justifiable became simply impossible. Marcia, he told himself, was of the utterly faithful type. She could not cherish even the thought of disloyalty to any responsibility; she would have thought him insane had he made love to her.

Yet he was very miserable, living as he did in familiar intercourse with her and yet unable to express anything of what he felt. He had better go away—that was the truth; Mrs. Bostwick, in her wisdom, had perceived the necessity—of that he was sure. He had a despairing conviction that no temporary separation from Marcia could do any-

thing but make her dearer to him; still, he had the superficial wisdom of the world at the tip of his tongue, and he was almost able to jibe at his own powers of constancy.

"If I stay," he told himself, "I'll surely let it out some day—just what I think of her, just what she means to me, and just exactly what I think of the cheap cad she's married to. And that would mean that Marcia's eyes would never meet mine again in confidence and affection, and that the door of her house would be shut against me. It's much better to go away, and let the fever burn itself out, and come back, temperate and chastened, to take what goods the gods provide me."

He had just reached this sane conclusion when there was a scrambling in the brush beneath him. He raised himself up gradually, and, as Marcia had once seen him appear from below the boulder, so he now beheld her. They had never met on the top of the rock since that bright, snowy morning which had lived in his recollection as a most joyful occasion. He called a greeting down to her, and she answered, the grave melancholy of her face breaking in sudden pleasure.

When she had climbed to the top and had recovered her breath and had talked of the view, he asked idly:

"What brings you here this morning? I've never seen you here since that snowy day—why, it's a year and a half ago! Have you abandoned the boulder?"

"I've never been here since," she said.

"What brings you to-day?"

She did not answer, but sat staring away across the miles of marshes to where the sea gleamed in a bright, steely line. She could not tell him that she had just had a quarrel with Loring over her refusal to go on an automobile trip to the White Mountains with Mrs. Tevis. "Such an intimate little party that your being in mourning won't matter in the least, dear Mrs. Bristow," Irene had cooed in making the invitation.

"If I remember," he began idly, "you

used to come to Merriam Woods chiefly when you needed a friend. Now here you find two—the woods and me. I suppose if I could learn wisdom I should no more bother you with questions about what brings you than they do. But I can't learn to be as good a friend as the woods."

Her pale face lit with a warm look of gratitude. She turned her eyes toward him.

"But that's just what you have done," she declared. "Oh, don't think because I'm such a dumb, inarticulate sort of person, that I don't understand you, I don't appreciate you! You have been kindness itself to me ever since you came. There never was any one half so kind!"

Under the near influence of that look, his heart began to beat unevenly. He looked at her greedily. The longing to tell her all that his kindness really meant, all that had grown out of his first idle impulse to befriend a forlorn little girl, surged overpoweringly upon him. Somehow, too, to-day she seemed older, more of a woman—a woman to give pity as well as to receive it, to give understanding, to give—ah, God, not love, not love!

"Don't talk about my being kind to you," he said, and there was a roughness in his voice that she had never heard there before. It compelled her eyes to be fixed upon his face, and what she saw there filled her suddenly with fear—with fear—but was it all fear, this dread that half stupefied her? Was there nothing sweet, nothing warm, in it? She dug her nails into her palms. She felt as though she was slipping under the influence of an anæsthetic, and were fighting to keep her consciousness. All the changing moods were written in her face. Henry Chisholm, looking at it, hungry for it, turned away suddenly with something like a sob.

"Don't you know I love you?" he asked, his face in his hands.

It seemed to Marcia that she was engulfed for a second in that wonderful ether against which she had fought—that delicious, strange, transmuting emotion. Why had she feared it?

But by the time he lifted his face from his hands, the wave had passed. To his self-reproachful eyes she looked frightened, horror-stricken.

"Don't say anything," he commanded her. "Don't rebuke me—don't even forgive me—don't tell me you know I'm insane. I'm not insane, except to speak like this. It isn't insane to love you, hopeless as it is. I suppose I'm a blackguard to talk like this, but I'm going away from you, I shall never see you again—he was taking his resolutions half drunkenly as he hurried along—"and it's been too much for me. You will forgive me when I'm not here."

"Going away?" Marcia's frightened voice rose in answer. "Going away? Then I shall have no friend left at all."

"Yes, you will," he told her firmly. "But if I stay here, you will not have a friend. You will have only a lover whom you must turn out of doors.

Away from you, I can be a man, but not here. And if ever you need me—just as a friend, just as a friend—remember that there's nothing on earth I wouldn't do to give you a moment's happiness."

She looked at him, dazed and stupefied by the hurry of her emotions. And while she looked he kissed her hand, and made his limping way down through the brush.

It was not until he was far away that she threw herself face downward in the sunshine, and cried that she could not bear it, that she would not bear it! Then the thought came to her of the responsibility that was already hers—she remembered her mother's words, that she must be strong and fine for two, for the sake of her child.

And after a while, she, too, went soberly back into the old town that already wore for her the empty look it was to wear for so many days.

TO BE CONTINUED.



The March of Peace

HOMEWARD, at dusk, I turn—I turn
To the dear place of all dear places!
The shadows fall; the street lights burn,
And, by me, drifts the tide of faces;
An ever-passing, endless stream
Like to some pageant, in a dream!

Strange pilgrims! No one face I know,
Or greeting eyes; yet, onward sweeping
Through lane and street, as soldiers go,
With steady pace, their feet are keeping.
The march of peace—more stately far
Than any cavalcade of war!

My feet keep time to the hurrying feet,
Kind earth below, sweet heaven above us;
My heart belongs to the hearts I meet,
Hastening, each, to the hearts that love us;
While street lights burn, and shadows fall,
Pilgrims and soldiers—brothers, all!

MADLINE BRIDGES.

BLESSINGS IN DISGUISE

By Charles Battell Loomis

I HOPE that no one takes every word in these "sermonettes" for literal truth. Sometimes they are truer than the truth would be, and sometimes absolutely word for word they may not be true—but the effect I aim at is always truth.

If something happened to me in Centennial Year, and I can the better ram home a moral by saying it took place yesterday, please forgive me. And if I want a hero for an illustrative anecdote, and use myself when the hero was really my next-door neighbor, lay that to my vanity and forgive me.

If, on the contrary, I wish to show what happened to a dyspeptic, surely you would not have me use myself when—since typhoid fever taught me a much-needed lesson—dyspepsia has flown my coop, to use a poetic phrase not yet acknowledged by professional poets.

But let me begin.

Oh, one moment. Allow me to thank those who held up my hands last month by writing pleasant letters to me. They came from such widely separated places as Mexico and Victoria; and the East, the Middle West, and the Pacific Coast had a hand in them. They did me good.

There will be the usual Mothers' Meeting at the home of—let's see, where was I?

Oh! When my next-door-but-one neighbor, the parson, who is a man of such sedentary habits that he has been troubled with dyspepsia ever since he entered the ministry, five years ago, came up from "the village" one afternoon last month, his sister Joanna met him at the gate, and before he could step out of the buggy, she said:

"The very worst has happened. I don't know what we're going to do."

"Is Rachel hurt?" asked Mr. Carrington, in alarm. Rachel is the apple of his eye, his only child.

"No, that would be better than what *has* happened."

"Well, *tell* me, *tell* me," said the parson testily, for he had eaten too heartily of corn fritters at noon dinner, and was paying the penalty. "Don't keep me in suspense."

"The drain has backed up."

"Oh, is that all?" said he, in relieved tones. "That happened last summer—no, summer before last. We'll just have to empty all the kitchen water outdoors. Hard

on the girl, but it might be worse. And when everybody's got in his hay, I'll get some one to dig down and find out what's the matter."

"But it's running into the well," said his sister, happy at being the bearer of exciting news.

And he *was* excited then. I was passing by, and I saw the whole episode.

"Why, we'll all have typhoid. What'll I do?"

He included me in his question, and I said:

"I guess you'll have to dig it out yourself."

He quoted Scripture at me. "I cannot dig."

"And it won't do any good to beg your neighbors to help," said I, "not until their hay's all in. Let's look at it."

He hitched his horse, and we walked around to the back of his house. His well, like a good many New England wells, is in the kitchen, and the sink is not six feet from it; but, as the drain tiles run a good eighty feet from the house and empty into the meadow, there is ordinarily no danger from tainted water.

We walked to the place where the tiles emerge on the pasture land, and found the opening choked with mud caused by a cave-in subsequent to a beating storm we had last month.

His sister had gone into the house, but his wife came out.

"Isn't this dreadful?" said the minister in a woebegone voice.

"Why, it might be worse," said she, smiling at me with a neighborly bow. "It hasn't been doing it more than a few minutes. I poured some soapsuds into the sink after washing Rachel's pink dress for the Sunday-school picnic, and the first thing I heard was water running into the well, and when I drew some water it was sudsy, and it *had* been perfectly clear up to then."

"Well, but who'll we get to dig up the tiles and find out where the stoppage is?"

"Can't you get Tom Stiles?"

"He's helping Judson with his hay; and it's no use trying to get anybody downtown, as you know very well. We've just got to stop using the sink, and we'll have to get our drinking water of the Judsons."

"Oh, that would make life unbearable, dear," said his wife, with one of her cheerful little laughs.

"Well, it's about as bad as it can be now," said Carrington dolefully. "I feel perfectly miserable, and now with all this extra work Mary will leave us, and Joanna will have to go back to mother, and Rachel will get typhoid."

I know the Reverend Mr. Carrington pretty well, as I've summered in Oakham for several years, and I now asked him why he didn't write a sermon on optimism and use this drain stoppage as a text.

He didn't see the point, and I think he thought me unsympathetic for suggesting such a thing when his calamity was fresh.

"I'll tell you what I'll do," said I. "I need exercise, and I'm sure you do. If you'll dig with me, I'll come right back, and we'll find that choked tile in half an hour, and then we'll pump the well dry, and you can help yourself to water from our well until rain or the spring fills your well up."

Mrs. Carrington clapped her hands.

"Oh, that'll be splendid. I'll bring my work out and watch you dig, and the outing will do us all good."

There came a voice from the sitting room. The brisk west wind had borne our voices into Carrington's sister, and she now said:

"You'll be fools if you expose yourselves to typhoid in that way. The only thing I see is to shut up the house, and have Rose and Rachel come to mother's with me, and you can board 'round, John."

I assured them that there was no danger to be gotten from digging out the tiles, as the obstruction was mostly soapy and oleaginous from gravies and such things, and I was sure that a few minutes' digging would find the trouble.

My counsels prevailed, and Aunt Joanna took Rachel out over to Tilting Rock to spend the rest of the afternoon, while Carrington and I, armed with spades, set to work.

"I'll sit up under the apple tree and encourage you," said Mrs. Carrington. "I've got some stockings to darn, and I might as well do them out here."

She really ought to have been a man, for she had much better notions as to how to go to work than either of us writing men. Carrington has no false pride, and I couldn't afford to have any under the circumstances, so we let Mrs. Carrington boss the job, and we worked like—like city men.

Carrington actually dug away with his frock coat on, and buttoned up at that, until I begged him, if he didn't want to overheat me, to please come down to shirt sleeves. And he peeled off.

We dug down at least four feet, making amateurish work of it, but we unearthed our first tile only to find that the obstruction extended farther up.

Mrs. Carrington made us some lemonade, and I asked her if she would be offended if I peeled down to trench digger's uniform, and she said she didn't mind a bit as long as I was comfortable, so off came my outing shirt; and a half hour later off came the parson's, and we worked like laborers.

All the afternoon we dug, and after a while I felt the joy in it, and thrust my spade into the turf or the loose earth with something approaching gusto.

But we heard the whistle of the New York express at six o'clock, and still we had not reached the tile, so we knocked off for the day.

I went home to dinner, while the Carringtons, who are country folk—that is, Mrs. Carrington is—went into supper.

I slept like a top that night, although I have been troubled with sleeplessness, and next morning when I went up to the parson's and asked him how he felt, he said he hadn't slept so well in a year, and he didn't feel very stiff, either.

I told him the same lie, and we set to work again. Mrs. Carrington had some mending to do, but she brought it out and sat not far from us. Aunt Joanna had taken Rachel to her grandma's at Meriden, being convinced that we were all in for typhoid—although, as I said, I've had it.

This time we began to dig near the house, and found the tiles were clear of obstruction up there, but that they were slanting toward the well. And still we dug, and dug, and dug until the factory whistles in Oakham Centre blew for noon.

At the invitation of the parson's wife I stayed to dinner, which she served outdoors under a sycamore maple. But first we washed up with carbolic soap, for our work was not altogether savory.

We both ate like growing boys, to Mrs. Carrington's great delight. She said she'd never seen John enjoy his dinner so since she married him, four years before.

It was two that afternoon when we found the last obstructed tile, and when we had cleaned all out we relaid the tiles, and began pumping water into them. And to our joy it went clear and clean right through to the meadow, and not a bit seeped through into the well.

It was easy work filling in, and Mrs. Carrington helped—with a hoe. Then we men took turns at the well, pumping it dry, and when my dinner time came I invited the Carringtons over to our house because we all felt hungry enough for a second dinner.

Well, you see the point, of course. According to Joanna—whose name must be the feminine for Jonah—"the worst had happened." According to experience, Mr. Carrington found a remedy for his dyspepsia, and I for my sleeplessness.

If you *can* turn an evil into a blessing, it's a great joke on the evil.



Some Feminine Records of Success

By Hildegarde Lavender

II—Two Successful Philanthropists and Some Successful Wives

ILLUSTRATED BY LAURA E. FOSTER

WHEN the doctor told Miss Allison, as she seemed to be recovering from pleurisy, that she had incipient tuberculosis, and that, if existence had any attractions for her, she must leave New York and lead an open-air life in a dry, high climate, she thought for a few minutes that the world, on such terms, was not worth while. She turned her face to the wall and said nothing for a while. Then she turned around again, and told the doctor who was giving her the verdict of the specialist that she would rather die than do as he suggested.

"Look!" she cried, when he made no reply and only gazed at her with a slight pity and scorn tempering the impassive professionalism of his eyes. "See what you ask of me! I've just brought this school into good, working order. My parents spent no end of money on my education and on travel for me; I've taken no end of degrees here and abroad, all that I might be able to do what I've always wanted to—run a girls' school as I think it ought to be run! And I've just reached the place where it's clear sailing—and you tell me to go to Arizona or the Adirondacks! It's out of the question. I won't do it!"

The doctor was somewhat stern with her.

"Of course you can do as you please about that," he said. "In the present state of our sanitary laws I can't quarantine you. But I most certainly should take steps to prevent your continuing to teach. Tuberculosis, my dear

Miss Allison, is a highly contagious disease. The career for which you have fitted yourself is ended in any case—until you are cured. In case you refuse the cure, it is ended at once and forever. Come, come, be a sensible woman and a credit to your training."

It took Miss Allison some time to take the doctor's advice in anything approaching its entirety. She yielded, but with a very bad grace. To the sorrowing, fear-stricken relatives who came to take charge of her removal from the scene of her activities, she was anything but gracious. To her chief assistant, who hastily scraped together enough money to buy out her interest in the already flourishing school, she was positively bitter. But in the course of a few weeks she had finished all the fretting details connected with her disappearance from the scene of her labors, and she was ready to start for Arizona.

She had chosen that region as being more remote from the theatre of her success, and therefore more endurable in her failure. As her illness was not so far developed that she had need of a constant attendant, she went West alone, and, like so many other sufferers from the same malady, merely took up her residence in a boarding house in an Arizona town.

For six months she chafed and rebelled against her lot in life. And for six months the disease showed no signs of abatement. Impatiently she declared to the local doctor that she could follow his treatment only to the extent of

spending most of her time idly in the open air; she had not the appetite for the constant milk-and-egg diet he advised, nor the will power to coerce appetite; nor, for the matter of that, did her boarding-house mistress supply those viands in perpetual profusion. If she was going to get well, she declared, the cure should be beginning; if she wasn't, the sooner she was through with this miserable farce of existence the better. And so on, and so on. Miss Allison, to be truthful, was a very disagreeable invalid, indeed.

In the summer one of her brothers came to spend a holiday with her, and they planned a camping trip up in the hills. They went, and the invalid slept in the open under the wide, velvety stars and breathed the utterly pure air of the wilds. But still she chafed, and still there was but little improvement in her condition.

Back in the little frontier town whence her brother had disconsolately and discouragedly gone East again, something happened to jar Miss Allison out of her sullen and selfish "grouch" against her destiny. Another invalid had arrived—a young man who was as desperately bent upon the recovery of his health as she was indifferent about her own. He had a family dependent upon him in the East—a wife and little children. He kept himself in a constant turmoil and fever of anxiety because he was incapacitated for their support. Miss Allison began by pitying him.

Soon she found herself giving him advice; he must stop worrying; he must be out of doors all the time—it would be better if he could sleep out of doors. He must drink his fresh milk and swallow his fresh eggs and force his red beef down, no matter what the effort cost him.

The young man naturally wanted to know why on earth a young woman so full of good counsel behaved in so careless a manner herself. He opined that it was because she knew she was advising trivial and worthless things.

Whereupon Miss Allison, who was nothing if not obstinate, began to prac-

tice the regimen she had preached, as an object lesson for an unbeliever.

It was not easily followed in the boarding house, where the fiction was religiously maintained that all the boarders were perfectly healthy men and women. Eggs every two hours were come by with difficulty, and the flow of milk was by no means continuous. The young man, who had been more or less convinced of the value of the treatment dictated by Miss Allison when he found her willing to adopt it herself, had another attack of depression because it was so difficult to obtain it anywhere outside of a sanitarium. And a sanitarium he dreaded with the unreasoning horror of the invalid who feels that to resort to one is the final confession of defeat and a very invitation to the undertaker.

Miss Allison, who, by this time, had become thoroughly interested in her experiment of trying to force a cure upon another, and who was really touched in the depths of her womanly heart by the tales of the children back East and by the plucky letters of the wife, bestirred herself in his behalf. Personally she investigated half the boarding houses in the town, but with always the same result. The fiction of health had to be maintained if one wished to board at all.

By and by the energy that had built up a school for girls asserted itself. She came in one day from a final scouring of the town for a suitable refuge for semi-invalids with a look of determination on her mouth. Grimly she announced her intention to found what she conceived to be the crying need of the place—a boarding house in which the well should be tolerated, but in which the semi-sick should be the first consideration—the exact obverse of the boarding houses already established. She had talked with her own doctor on the subject.

"My dear Miss Allison," he had assured her, "if you do that, you will deserve to rank as one of the true benefactors of the Southwest. It is full of people who come here tainted with disease, but not yet ill enough to be rele-



Miss Allison lay in her hammock, swung in a secluded corner between two junipers.

gated to a sanitarium, people who might take up with some light, outdoor occupation and support themselves if only they could live in the proper surroundings while they are here. You have no idea of the pathetic, the tragic experiences we run up against every day."

And then he launched upon one of the favorite themes of the physicians in regions renewed for the cure of tuberculosis, the theme of the pitiable helplessness of many who go West seeking cures. But he finished his address by telling her that she herself was in no condition to undertake such a work.

"Although," he added, "you are improving, not merely holding your own as you were for so long."

Miss Allison had gone from him to a real-estate agent and had gained an option on almost the only big house vacant in the city, the abandoned dwelling of a mine owner whose wife had become afflicted with the desire for the greater social glories of Denver. Then she had sought her invalid, and had told him of her intention.

"Send for your wife and children,"

she told him. "We'll put this scheme to the test. I'll organize—I used to be considered something of an organizer—and I'll finance the thing; I have enough to do that for a six-month. Your wife shall be superintendent under me. And we'll all grow gloriously well together."

The grounds of the magnate of mines had been extensive, and in a few days they were decorated with several piles of lumber and several rolls of canvas. Balconies began to appear at architecturally impossible places; tents bloomed in the yards. Cots of all sorts and descriptions followed. There were a small forest of heavy screens and a load of hammocks.

In six weeks a card appeared in the paper and in every physician's office announcing that a boarding house for invalids not requiring hospital service and nursing, and for their families, was open upon such and such a street, and that all the approved rules in regard to air and diet might there be practiced.

The wife of the invalid who had been worrying himself into his grave

because of his financial difficulties was a superintendent beyond compare, managing her establishment with the thrift and neatness of a good housewife and the brooding care of a good mother.

And Miss Allison lay in her hammock, swung in a secluded corner between two junipers, and felt the thrill of pride which a good organizer feels in the successful outcome of any undertaking. Occasionally sentimental ladies, whom her establishment had enabled to be with their beloved invalids as no hospital ever could permit, came and wept their gratitude "all over her," as she crossly described it.

But apart from such exhibitions of thankfulness, there were few drawbacks to her pleasure in her accomplishment. She insists that she regards the institution in a strictly businesslike light, and that she would immediately abandon it did it not pay its expenses with a handsome margin of profit. But her physician is not the only one in the invalid-ridden little settlement who says when she passes: "There goes the best philanthropist this town has ever had!"

The fame of her undertaking has spread through other towns in the Southwest, and there are now, to the immense gratitude of many families, boarding houses where a man or woman threatened with consumption, but not yet sufficiently afflicted to require sanitarium care, may go and live under proper conditions, sleeping out of doors, eating what is prescribed for cure, and eating as often as the prescription demands; and yet being in no way subject to the restrictions of a hospital or to separation from such members of his family as choose to share his exile with him. Neither does residence in such a boarding house prohibit any occupation which residence in any other boarding house would permit—an immeasurable advantage over the hospitals for the only half invalided.

The second of the philanthropists in this group lays as small claim to the proud title as does the founder of the "half hospital." Indeed, she repudiates it utterly.

6

"Philanthropists?" she says, with something approaching a snort of defiance. "I have no use for them. They always claim a superiority for being interested in dirty people instead of in something else; whereas it's no more virtuous to be interested in dirty people than in clean ones, or in either than in crops or blue china or old ivories. Have what fad you please, but for pity's sake don't claim it as a title to righteousness."

With these views firmly fixed in her mind, it is small wonder that she disclaims the name of benefactress. Her own passion happened to be hunting dogs—she had, at an early age, lamented her sex, and had later declined to let it be a bar to her avocations. But this recital is not the story of her interest in dumb brutes or of her affiliation with the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

To breed dogs, one requires space and considerable remoteness from oversensitive ears. The woman who, all unforeseen by herself, was to take rank as a real, though modest, philanthropist, secured an almost abandoned New England farm for her uses, and, having put it into habitable shape, proceeded to spend a large part of each year on it. Gradually, with the slowness with which the outsider in rural districts penetrates to the core of rural life, she grew to know the "natives." The better she knew them, the more she was depressed and perturbed by their standards of living. And as soon as one is distressed concerning another person's standards of living, the philanthropic career is begun.

The country in which the woman had her dog farm was beautiful. There were substantial old houses in it bearing mute testimony to the period when New England was not abandoned by her ablest and most energetic sons, and when her stock and her crops were not driven out of the market by the competition of the more fertile West.

In these excellent old houses the dog fancier found the descendants of their builders living lives that struck her as nothing less than tragic. The lands

were farmed in a half-hearted way, new methods were looked upon askance, the food was of the most dyspeptic and monotonous sort, the glorious fresh air from the hills was religiously excluded from most of the bedrooms, and the glorious sunshine conscientiously shut out of the living rooms. The pestilential fly was borne as an inevitable affliction sent by an inscrutable Providence. The schools in the neighborhood were poor. The women did their housework as dully and uninterestedly as the men their farming, and all were drudges together. The intellectual and physical deterioration of stock which logically accompanied this sort of life was, among the poorer classes, companion to a similar moral degeneracy.

"Why!" exclaimed the dog fancier, in righteous horror. "Some of those people in the hills have no more decency than New York society in a Sunday paper."

The horror of being a philanthropist was so strong upon her that she did not commit the fatal blunder of rushing in among the shy, suspicious, pettily shrewd people with messages concerning the value of fresh air, of sunshine, of fly extermination, of books, of variety in foods, and of social intercourse. Instead, with a wisdom which must have been instinctive, she made friends with her next-farm neighbor, who happened to be a woman of foreign parentage—one of the ascending race instead of the decaying one. This woman had children, and consequently had ambitions. Fortunately these ambitions were not solely financial.

"My cook has gone back to town; the country was too much for her," the dog fancier told her neighbor one day. "I'm going to do my own cooking for a while—I'm really a *cordons bleu*. Will you let one of the girls come up and help me out? We'll do everything together, and it will be a relief to my loneliness as well as a help."

The neighbor consented, and for a month Letty, aged fifteen, quick, acquisitive, imitative, abode in a house where never a piece of fried meat, a

soggy soda biscuit, or a clammy potato appeared upon the board. She also slept with her windows wide open, and she saw the sunshine beating in upon the rugs in the living room.

She observed that toast took no more time in preparation than biscuits, that the other products of the vegetable garden were as easy to cook and serve as the everlasting potato, that her hostess frequently consulted a small volume containing a hundred rules for the preparation of eggs; in short, she learned, by daily practice and precept, that a varied and healthful and palatable bill of fare was possible without the purchase of any more extraneous groceries and meats than her own family indulged in, and without any more labor in the kitchen.

Out of that month was born in her a zeal for domestic science which was finally satisfied, thanks to the dog fancier's influence, and the mother's ambition; and thence, eventually, a summer course in domestic science for farmer's daughters.

In the village near which Hillcrest Kennels was situated, there were the customary library, open for a few hours each day, a scattered half dozen of shops, a casino for summer residents, and a golf club patronized by the same class. The farmer folk had no meeting place, the hall where the grange meetings were held being firmly closed at all other times.

When the men did their errands in town, the hospitality of the blacksmith's establishment, of a casual saloon, or of the feed and harness shop was theirs. When the women drove in, there was nothing for them to do but to drive out again as soon as possible.

Once or twice the owner of the kennels experienced the discomfort of this state of affairs when she had to spend an hour or two in the village in the season when the casino and golf club were closed, and her summer acquaintances had taken wing to town. Probably out of the dreariness of those experiences was born the idea of the East Hartwell Women's Club.



They often found the "dog woman," as she had once been called, at the club-room.

The East Hartwell women assured the dog fancier that such a project as hers was utterly unfeasible. They had no time to dawdle in the village, they said; they had to hurry home from the store or the creamery to get the men's supper or to strain the milk or to feed the chickens. But the dog fancier asked them if they would not have appreciated a comfortable refuge when they were caught in the village in great thunderstorms in summer; or when they had to wait three hours for the horses to be shod; or when the train for which they waited was reported two hours late—a common

enough occurrence, she bitterly declared; or when the doctor had been called away and was likely to remain out for three hours.

They admitted that on such rare occasions a club-room would be of advantage, but they emphasized the "rare."

However, even with such small encouragement, the owner of the kennels went ahead. She hired a big room over the shoe store in the brick "business block." She fitted it out plainly and comfortably from her own house—with a big, broad couch, two or three easy-chairs, and two or three rockers, a few pictures belonging to a rather unsophisticated period of artistic appreciation, a bookcase full of "standard" novels which she had coerced from her friends, a big table

covered with magazines, and a big, round stove more remarkable for its heat-distributing properties than for its æsthetic charm. Then she left the key with the shoe merchant and issued a general notification that the room was there, and that it belonged to the women of East Hartwell.

At first they came out of curiosity, and then they began to find the place as useful as its donor had suggested it would be. They began to make appointments to meet there; they dipped into the literature on the table and on the shelves. There was, perhaps, a preponderance of women's magazines

among the periodicals, but they soon became interested in those.

They often found the "dog woman," as she had once been called, at the club-room, and whenever they did the conversation was almost sure to touch upon some practical aspect of farm work, of housekeeping, or sanitation before its close.

It came about quite naturally in the end that she should say: "I have a friend who is an expert on milk—she runs a model dairy, and sells her milk for thirty cents a quart. I think that she would come down and give us a talk if you cared to hear her." Or, "Why don't we have a dance?" Or, "Let us have a sewing bee for these poor Drowns who were burned out the week before last."

It is three years now since the establishment of that club. Its founder paid the rent for only six months; at the end of that time its usefulness was so fully demonstrated that not a farmer's wife in the township would have been willing to do without it. It remains an informal institution, its educational work so incidental as to defy detection, though by no means so slight as to be negligible.

Other townships roundabout have copied it. If you ask some of the ministers and doctors of the region what they think of the women's club movement they will tell you that it is the best thing that has happened to farmers' wives since the introduction of the sewing machine or the carpet sweeper.

But the woman who started the movement at East Hartwell indignantly denies that she is a reformer or a benefactor of her race.

"Philanthropy?" she sniffs. "My dear, it's fun!"

"That's all very fine," quoth the critic who sometimes passes upon my philosophy. "It's all very well to tell women how to climb out of the scullery class of laborers, but after all that isn't the biggest task in the world. It isn't even the greatest thing in the world to suggest unconventional lines of philanthropy. Not so many women want to

know anything about how to succeed in business or how to benefit their kind in an inoffensive and unostentatious way.

"Most of them look forward to even that unpromising marriage, which you mention so casually, as to a positive haven. They don't see it as household drudgery under increasingly difficult conditions, with less and less money per capita. They look forward eagerly to it, they rush to enter it, and the people who ought to be told how to make a success of life are the two or three million wives who are not finding existence a garden of roses, and who don't seem to know how to improve their conditions. Write a screed on 'successful wives I have known'—if you're ever known any, and if you really want to respond to a popular need.

"After all, being a wife is the only career nine-tenths of us ever embark upon.

"And don't tell how the one exceptional woman since the world began married the one perfect man and managed to endure existence. Tell about some who took everyday material and made it into something worth while—the husband with a fixed aversion to society, the one with a passionate affection for his old clothes, the one with a large and critical circle of affectionate relatives, the one with a volatile fancy or a taste for strong drink or a habit of penuriousness or a habit of extravagance—tell how their wives took the imperfect average man and made him a shining success of domestic existence."

"Successful wives I have known"—the scoffing critic did not dream what a large roll would answer to that call, even in one limited circle. There is the wife of the genius who has escaped being swamped in her husband's overpowering greatness—a task requiring a sort of genius in itself. There is the wife of the rich young man who chafes at society and loves to play with chemicals until his hands would disgrace a self-respecting mechanic's; the wife of the enthusiast whose enthusiasms are violent and brief; the wife of the old-maidish man, with a horrible penchant

for taking care of himself and obtruding his galoshes into the conversation; the wife of the large-hearted person who cannot remember, when his salary is in his pocket, that the rent bill is on his desk and the butcher's statement in the letter box; the wife of the dear and kind but misguided man who insists upon making her purchases for her.

"When you consider," says a wise woman who has made a conspicuous success of matrimony, "the infinite variety of ways in which a perfectly upright husband may make himself disagreeable, one wonders that any woman over eighteen dares to marry. You needn't tell me that worthy and virtuous wives have also their own ways of stretching the matrimonial line almost to the point of breaking—I deny that it means as much to a man. He isn't as sensitive—call it irritable if you want to. Besides, he has the everlasting masculine refuge—all outdoors.

"I know a good, kind, respectable husband who loves to do amateur mechanics at home; he is always getting machine oil over everything and pounding with a hammer when the baby is taking a nap, or entering his wife's drawing room when she is entertaining her most catty and critical neighbor at tea, looking like a particularly disreputable furnace cleaner. Now, his wife cannot escape his fad—she cannot get up and leave the house, the baby, the dinner, and the caller to their own fate. She has no outside refuge, as he has if he happens to dislike her housecleaning.

"Of course, it's a little thing. I suppose that when we consider the gentlemen who figure in the newspapers, the ones who kill their wives, the ones who neglect and deceive them, a woman whose husband is merely a mild maniac on mechanics should go down on her knees and thank Heaven for her blessings. But it is probably hard to remember that when axle grease mysteriously appears on the embroidered doilies, and the point of one's embroidery scissors has been broken in an effort to use them as a screw driver. Now I——"

She paused, and gave a reminiscent sigh and smile.

"You!" was the natural rejoinder. "What have you to complain of? Your husband is a glass of fashion and a mold of form."

"Yes," she agreed. "Home mechanics were not my cross. But I had what I considered a much worse one at the time. I don't particularly admire women who discuss the trials of their own domestic lives—but I fancy mine was a common one, and perhaps it might be of some use to some one to hear how I lived through it.

"Edward was a very satisfactory lover—most men are, I dare say. He was thoughtful and ardent, and he played the engaged game very prettily indeed. Well—I suppose I expected him to keep on playing it indefinitely. And he most emphatically did not.

"I don't mean that he developed into a surly brute on the honeymoon, or asked me to wait upon him or to open doors for him a year after we were married. But he did not keep on making love—there were no more merry, half-tender, half-playful notes during the day, there were no more make-believe quarrels and rapturous reconciliations in the evening.

"In fact, Edward, having won his wife, had gone on to the next great game of his life—he wanted to succeed in his business. He worked long and hard, and I suppose he had no energy left for the pretty scenes and crises which had been so picturesque a feature of our engagement.

"Of course I said to myself—and of course also to him—that he no longer loved me. He was puzzled at first, and a little perturbed. Then he was plain impatient. He demanded to know, with spirit, if it would be a greater proof of love for him to be pretending jealousies he did not feel—jealousies which it would be an insult to me to pretend to feel—and having sprightly conversations concerning them, and misunderstandings, and understandings, and all the natural and inevitable concomitants of engagements and preengagements, than it was for him to 'hustle' ten hours

a day for a decent income and a decent position for me.

"Well," pursued Edward's wife, "I don't remember what answer I made. I suppose I refused to admit any folly in my point of view. However, I did do a little thinking. I sat down with myself for an hour and debated. I asked myself what else than a silly make-believe it was to go on acting as if married life was the same thing as engaged life.

"I know that there are students of emotion and of social conditions who don't believe in marriage as it is at present, who maintain that some sort of 'free' or fluent relation would act as a better preserver of love and a better developer of the individual. But Edward and I were not of the social-pioneer class. We had been married with book and bell and eight bridesmaids, for better, for worse. And for my part I purposed to stay married, and to enjoy staying married.

"Well, I considered whether, even if Edward were still willing to go on playing the lover's game, I should long derive real satisfaction out of an insincere and unreal situation. I don't want you to misunderstand about Edward. He had not ceased to kiss me good-by when he went to work or to embrace me on his return. He often seized my hand when we were alone at table. But love-making was no longer his chief business when he was in my society—there was no more of the excitement, of the piquancy that attend an engagement. And he flatly refused to do any of the playing, with me or other people, which would lead to that particular sort of excitement and piquancy. And I, as I said, asked myself if I would long derive any joy from an excitement founded upon unreality.



He had not ceased to kiss me good-by when he went to work.

"At bottom, I suppose I'm a commonplace American woman. I had to admit that the made-up situation would soon pall upon me; of course, some women of whom we read supply the excitement which all women require, and which most of us are not taught to find anywhere but outside the play of the emotions, in 'affairs,' more or less serious, with other men than their husbands.

"I decided to take my excitement in some more dignified form. I made for myself real interests—one of them was my husband's business, and our intimate comradeship and true 'partnership' date from that time. It isn't enough to be the companion of your husband's sports, fads, and amusements

—or to keep him yours. Edward takes a real interest in our house, for example. And I, by the way, took house-keeping for one of my excitements. I tried to make an exact science of it! Any woman who will undertake that will not lack occupation for all her moments; she will have little time for bewailing her husband's forgetfulness of her birthday, or his ignoring her moods.

"You see, most of us marry plain, American men of one sort and another. We take them with our eyes wide enough open, and very pleased with what they are seeing. We get them home, and forthwith proceed to become quite unhappy because we haven't married French dramatists or Italian poets or English noblemen. We cheerfully—even eagerly—marry men who use a great quantity of slang or of tobacco, and then bemoan ourselves that our housemates do not speak limpid, Addisonian English, and do not practice the principles of the President of the Anti-Nicotine League.

"During the glamorous days of the engagement we smile benignant forgiveness—forgiveness? I mean sympathy—on a man's oar-blistered hands, and after marriage we fret at their calloused appearance and ask if it is necessary to his enjoyment to look like a train stoker.

"Well, I was like the rest of us in my degree. I had married—quite happily and gratefully—an ordinary, energetic, business man, and now I was pouting because I found myself housed with something else than a character from an English society drama. But I, my dear, as I have said, had sense enough to realize the exceeding imbecility of my attitude and to change it in time. It's always easier to change one's attitude than it is to make over a mature man. And it's because women do not realize that simple proposition that so many marriages are not conspicuous successes."

Thus Edward's wife on the whole wisdom of wives. Later, I sounded the philosophy of Martha, whose husband undoubtedly had afforded his

bride all the excitement she desired, since he was by nature a philanderer of a mild sort. Yet Martha is a smiling, easy matron, and she and her husband live on terms of distinguished amicability, not to say affection and comradeship.

To ask a woman how she manages to endure and apparently to enjoy existence with a man who is of the moth variety is a task requiring tact. But a foolish young bride saved the investigator the trouble. She had gone to Martha weeping over her husband's interest in the singing of the girl next door, and asking whether a divorce or a friendly separation would be the better in the circumstances.

"I told the poor little goose," said Martha vigorously, "to go home and get together a dinner party of the most agreeable people she could summon at short notice, and to make the dinner a good one, and to ask the singing girl in, and to wear her own most becoming dinner gown. It will give her something to do, at any rate. It will also open up to her husband some other interest and admiration for the evening besides the singing girl.

"If the poor little goose could only realize it in time, that's her recipe for happiness—to give her husband just as many and just as varied interests as possible. Why, she knew what he was when she married him. What's the use of tragedy now, because marriage hasn't changed his disposition any more than it has the color of his eyes? She might just as reasonably come here sobbing because his eyes haven't grown blue as to come here sobbing that he spends an hour an evening listening to the girl next door singing.

"If her Hubert hadn't cared more for her than for all the girls next door, and all the girls on the block, he wouldn't have married her. He's a volatile person, I grant you—but that's no new revelation to his wife, since they grew up together.

"I admit that a baby-woman can't cope with the situation created by marriage to a man of that sort; it takes a woman with something of the philos-

opher and a great deal of the mother in her make-up. Such a one will understand the relative value of herself and of her husband's various other enthusiasms—whether they are motor boats or girls next door or parlor socialism or foreign plays and their interpreters.

"The understanding, sympathetic wife is the one fixed thing in such a man's life. He turns to her not only from his enthusiasms, but in them as well. He finds her steadfast in the shifting sea in which he himself lives. I doubt if any wife receives more of adoration than such a one; it is intermittent, perhaps, but it is intense.

"And if, in addition to being the fixed fact in her husband's shifting fancies, she is an attractive fact, her dominion is perfectly secure.

"But the little, jealous, petty, cry-baby of a woman—what business had she to marry such a man at all? She should have found a patient Rock-of-Gibraltar sort of person, and let him support her melancholies and her pets and her moods all his days—she'd have had them just the same. But, no—these girls will marry one man, and then quarrel with fate, and bore the neighbors because he isn't a totally different sort!"

So that Martha's secret of a successful married life found itself at last to be the same as that of the "hustling" Edward's wife; namely, to realize what sort of man one has been married to, and not to badger him to become some other sort, either in little things or in big ones. Years and the subtle influences of association will effect changes; curtain lectures and scenes will never alter anything except a man's pleasure in his wife's companionship.

"I sometimes hear lofty souls decry the poor human way of trying to make the best of conditions by thinking how much worse they might be, or how much worse somebody else's conditions are," continued Martha, the philosopher. "It may not be the noblest way conceivable. But it is not to be de-

spised practically. If that poor little bride, who is moaning her heart out and getting herself red-eyed and red-nosed with her tears, would stop long enough to consider what some women have to endure, methinks she might bear her own destiny less grumblingly.

"I know a wife who has made a success of life, though her husband is a periodic drunkard. It nearly kills her, of course, but she says, and she means it, that when she considers the lot of women whose husbands are constant tipplers, never quite sober, her own seems to her almost perfect.

"And I know a woman who is never able to look the butcher in the eye because of her unpaid bill—and that's due to her husband's spendthrift habits—who honestly and wholeheartedly rejoices because she isn't married to a penurious weigher of every cent.

"It's all in the point of view. Of course, there are impossible men, and there are impossible marriages. But, thanks be, not so many in our comfortable land and our comfortable station in life. And when a marriage isn't impossible, I believe it can always be made a success by the wife, provided she will sit down and realize exactly what kind of a man she has married; will resolve to be glad that it is not another, and, for her, worse kind; and will take him as he is, not entering upon the hopeless, back and heart-breaking task of trying to transform an adult male being.

"After all, matrimony ought not to be made a reformatory for men—and that's what too many women try, doubtless from the noblest motives, to make it. That way lies failure. If I were giving brides—or any other women, for that matter—a good working motto, do you know what it would be?"

A negative silence replied to Martha.

"It would be a line I once read in a Western story," she said. "Life ain't in holdin' a good hand, but in playin' a pore hand well!"



The CONDITION

By Robert Rudd
Whiting



Author of "Tommy, Spellbinder"

ILLUSTRATED BY HARRIET ADAIR NEWCOMB

TOMMY and Tony—Tony is short for Antoinette and strong for Tommy—were facing the first really big problem, not counting the baby, of course, that had come into their lives since they had been married. They were all upset over the death of a queer old uncle of Tommy's. It wasn't so much the personal loss, for, as Tommy explained to a man who tried to condole with him at the club: "It was an awfully distant uncle—didn't know any one well."

What upset them was this: Tommy, who is really dreadfully clever about such things, gathered from what the lawyers told him that the old gentleman had left them some perfectly vulgar amount of money upon condition that they should keep his old family place out in Jersey just as it was, and occupy it at least four months of each year. If this condition was not complied with, his fortune was to go to the Philosophical Research Society of North America.

"Those are the old dandruffians that printed a paper of his once," Tommy explained to Tony. "It was something about the relative importance of type and paper in reading. Unk always maintained that it wasn't the type itself so much as it was the shape of the blank space around it that conveyed the meaning to the eye."

"Oh, dear!" exclaimed Tony petu-

lantly. "And I had so set my heart on that darling old 'our house' we saw when we were motoring over from Philadelphia. We were afraid to ask about it, for fear that we'd find that it wasn't for sale. And now, just as we'd almost decided— Oh, well, maybe your uncle's house won't be so very bad."

Tommy shook his head.

"Not that I've ever seen the place, but unk must have been very fond of it," he reminded Tony gloomily, "or he wouldn't have raised such a beastly row about it in his will. And if you had ever known unk—well, any place that unk could have been really fond of has got a Mansard roof."

Tony looked mournful.

"With a pattern worked in it in different colored slates," pursued merciless Tommy.

"Still," Tony bravely suggested, "the baby will be in the country, and that's the principal thing."

"Yes, baby will be perfectly crazy about it. Especially the imitation sandstone lions on each side of the door."

Tony looked reproachful.

"And the iron deer on the lawn," he continued relentlessly.

"Tommy! You really don't suppose—"

"Uncle was awfully fond of the old place," insisted Tommy doggedly, "and I know my unk."

"Mightn't it burn up or something?" asked Tony, with a faint ray of hope.

"Not likely. Think of how many, many houses there are of just that sort, and not one of them ever has burned up."

Tony sighed.

"Of course, it really isn't as though we couldn't get along without it," she reasoned aloud, gazing thoughtfully through into the tropical luxury of the conservatory. "But it would seem al-

And that is how that was settled.

The average young couple in Tommy's and Tony's place, having thus decided to accept the condition of their uncle's bequest, would have set off at once to serve their first four months' imprisonment and get it over with. As a consequence, they would probably have hated the place all the rest of their lives.

But Tommy and Tony were not an



"Tommy," interrupted Connie, "are you lying?"

most wicked—like throwing away food or wasting something—if we should let that money go to some horrid old society without even trying for it. Besides," she concluded, with something like awe in her voice, "we owe it to the baby."

Tommy's jaw dropped. Clearly he was puzzled as to how they had fallen into baby's debt to any such appalling extent in so short a time. But he noticed that Tony's eyes were moist, so he kissed her tenderly, and said: "Yes, dear."

average young couple. They went about their problem scientifically.

"Everything in this world is comparative," announced Tommy sagely one evening when they were talking things over. "Likes and dislikes, big-nesses and littlenesses—everything's a matter of comparison."

"You mean," said Tony, "that if every one else in the world weighed over two hundred and fifty pounds, Bertie Beckwith might be looked upon as almost slender."

"Exactly. Or, to take an even better

example, if you weren't 'you,' Tony, there are undoubtedly other women in the world to-day who might be considered almost beautiful."

"Be sensible, Tommy! I don't see what all this has to do with 'The Condition.'"

For want of a better name they had fallen into the way of speaking of uncle's house as "The Condition."

"It's simply this," explained Tommy. "If we were to go right down there from here we'd probably detest the sight of the place all the rest of our days. First impressions make a lot of difference, you know. Now, there must be places worse than The Condition somewhere. Not uglier houses, perhaps, but places with unpleasant surroundings, bothersome neighbors, and all that sort of thing. Well, it's up to us to hunt out some such place and live there for a while. Then, when we just can't stand it a minute longer, we'll move to The Condition, and I'll wager that the old eyesore will seem almost attractive by comparison. Why, I knew a man once who grew really fond of



"What on earth is the matter?" he asked, alarmed.

Berlin merely by living in Zurich. That's the real reason that I never want to see the Grand Cañon of Arizona; it would make me feel so cheap if I should ever meet my death by falling off a stepladder. It's all a matter of comparison.

"Why," he continued, warming up to his subject, "there are hundreds of places right here within an hour of New York, any one of which, given a fair trial, will make The Condition

seem like the show place in Paradise. The newspaper advertisements are full of them—all carefully restricted places, too. I must get a pair of pink silk garters to keep my shirt sleeves up when I mow the lawn."

Tony clapped her hands with delight.

"Oh, Tommy, it'll be simply delicious!"

"I hope not," said Tommy seriously. "We won't get to like The Condition if it is."

Two or three months after this Tommy drifted into one of his clubs. Connie Everhard hailed him with delight.

"Tommy!" he cried. "Where on earth have you been keeping yourself? Tried to call on you a couple of weeks ago, and found the house all closed up."

"Out in the country," said Tommy, interpreting his friend's touching of the bell as an invitation to sit down.

"So I heard. Inherited a place from an uncle or something, didn't you? How do you like it?"

"Fine," said Tommy very deliberately. "We are getting to like it better and better every day."

"What's it like?"

"Don't know. We haven't seen it yet."

Connie stared at him in amazement. Tommy realized that his friend's mystification was fully justified, and proceeded to explain:

"You see, neither of us had ever seen the place and we felt a certain delicacy in asking much about it—'twould be too much like looking a gift house in the mouth, or front door, or wherever it is you shouldn't look 'em. Besides, suppose we should find that we didn't like it? So we decided that we'd better go some place else for a while first; some place that would surely make us like this one by comparison. That's how we came to choose Axemoore Park.

"Rotten little hole, Axemoore Park! All full of fussy little villa effects with Queen Anne fronts and Mary Ann backs. We thought it was just what we were looking for, but we made the

great mistake of taking the ugliest house in town. You see you don't get the full effect of an ugly house by living in it—it's the neighbors who have to look at it. We hadn't thought of that. As soon as we realized it, of course we moved. We're in a place now called Dogwood Dell—electric lights, good water supply, country club with nine-hole golf course."

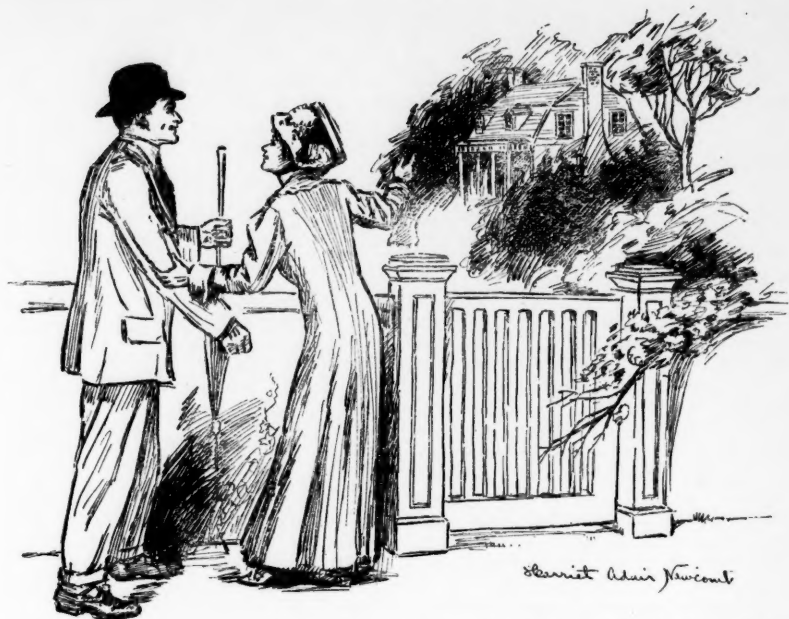
"Tommy," interrupted Connie, looking him square in the eyes, "are you lying?"

Tommy, by way of answer, produced a one-hundred-trip ticket for Dogwood Dell, and continued:

"It's really an ideal place for what we want. It's breeding a love in us for the old uncular homestead that I never dreamed could exist. We can hardly wait to see the dear old place, regardless of what it is like. Why, say, Connie, you ought to hear the woman in the next house to ours sing. I don't know much about music, but I'd be willing to back her for either height or distance against any other singer in the world, bar none.

"Did you ever stop to think, Connie, what a beastly advantage music has over all other arts? When a man is making a picture or a statue he goes off by himself, and does it in decent seclusion. When it's finished, if you don't like it you don't have to look at it. Same way with literature. Books can be taken up and put down according to the reader's moods and whims. But music! Just one person who goes in for the training of wild noises can scatter the peace and comfort of defenseless thousands! There's no getting away from it; there's no—Good heavens!" he broke off, as the clock chimed the quarter hour. "You've been so frightfully entertaining, Connie—I had no idea it was so late. Just twenty minutes to make my ferry. I've got to get out in time to help poor Tony listen to that singing. Come over and see us some time—Dogwood Dell—we'll be there till May."

But Tommy and Tony did not stay in Dogwood Dell until May. One day



Suddenly she stopped short, and seized Tommy's arm.

early in April, when Tommy returned from the city, he found Tony on the verge of tears.

"What on earth is the matter?" he asked, alarmed. "The baby——"

"Baby's all right," Tony assured him, putting her arms around his neck and trying bravely to smile. "It isn't anything, really. But oh, Tommy, do we absolutely have to stay here until May? Couldn't we—couldn't we leave sooner, perhaps? Couldn't we leave——"

"What a brute I've been! Here you've been detesting this hole all the time, and I've made you——"

"It isn't that, Tommy; honest, it isn't. I've actually grown fond of it here. I like it."

"Oh, so that's the trouble, is it? The place isn't serving its purpose. The longer we stay here the more you'll hate The Condition."

"No, Tommy; please let me explain. Mrs. Redding was in the other day and——"

"That's that woman next door that sings. What's she been doing? Does our listening annoy her?"

"You mustn't talk that way. She's really a dear when you get to know her, and we've become very good friends. That's just the trouble. The other day when she was in here we were talking about cooking, and she asked me if I knew a good recipe for orange marmalade. Of course I didn't, Tommy, but she was so awfully nice about it that I just couldn't resist giving her one anyway—and——" Tony's voice was tragic. "*Next Thursday she's going to put some up!*"

Tommy gave a long whistle, and stroked his chin.

"That is serious," he solemnly admitted. "Hm-mm! Let's see, this is Monday, isn't it? To-morrow I can get hold of Perkins up in town, and make arrangements to have him take the servants out to The Condition, and open up the house. We might as well

start right in. If it's possible to learn to love a place we've certainly done our lessons."

"Hadn't you better find out about the servants' quarters first?" suggested Tony doubtfully. "There might not be room."

"No," said Tommy decidedly, "that would be foolish. For if we found there wasn't room for them all we couldn't send them down. And then we would be in a fix. Can you be ready to start Wednesday morning, in case I find there's an early train? Good! How did you tell her to make her old marmalade, anyhow?"

Late Thursday afternoon, after a little traveling and much changing of trains, Tony, nurse with baby, and Tommy with baby's feedings in a more or less portable refrigerator that bumped against his knees, finally reached their station. John was there to meet them with the wagonette.

"Everything all right?" asked Tommy.

"Yessir," John assured him.

Tommy looked relieved.

"Is it too far to walk?" asked Tony, hesitating with her foot on the step of the wagon. "Couldn't we send nurse and baby on with John? I feel so cramped from the train, and—"

It wasn't too far—barely a mile, they were told—the first big place on the right beyond the bridge. John and his charges drove on ahead.

"I thought it would be nicer to come upon it gradually," Tony explained, when they were plodding along the road. "It—it won't be quite so much of a shock."

"Bully plan!" agreed Tommy. "It will give us a chance to get control of

our emotions before the servants see us—servants are so awfully impressionable."

Tony paused on the old stone bridge to glance up the brook, gurgling along between its wooded banks past the ruins of an abandoned mill.

"Tommy!" she cried delightedly. "Look!"

"Come," he urged. "This sort of thing will only make it harder."

"Funny," he said, a little farther on, "but I wonder if they ever brought me out here to see unk when I was little. It all seems sort of vaguely familiar."

Tony seemed puzzled, too.

Suddenly she stopped short, and seized Tommy's arm. Far off at the source of a carefully ill-kept path that seemed to flow rather than lead down to the road stood a vine-covered old stone house, jealously guarded by wide-spreading, sheltering trees.

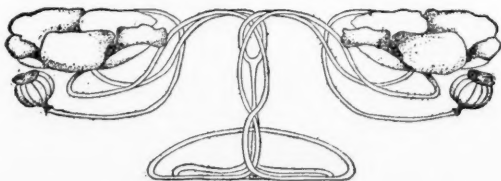
"Our house!" gasped Tony, amazed.

This, the house they had set their hearts on after just one fleeting glance; this, the house they had loved so well that Tommy had dreaded to ask about it; this—The Condition! "Our house!" she whispered, with awe.

All at once she was seized with a horrible suspicion. She shot a quick glance at Tommy. Was it possible that he had known all along? Had he — But, no; there could be no doubting the genuineness of Tommy's bewilderment.

"It's all right, I suppose," he drawled, still staring up at the house as though dazed, "but—but—it rather spoils Dogwood Dell, doesn't it?"

And then, as was his custom when at a loss for words, he suddenly kissed Tony.



ON THE QUARTER-DECK OF THE DICKER- DOODLE



—BY—

HOLMAN F. DAY

ILLUSTRATED BY CH. GRUNWALD

FOR all of ten minutes Cap'n Aaron Sproul had been giving a violent imitation of a second-rate Triton endeavoring to rise from the sea. A smoky sou'wester, lashing at a lee shore, has a reckless and grim sportiveness about it. The struggling cap'n had only two hands. The rampageous sea had many.

It juggled the remains of the battered yawl in which Cap'n Sproul had been cast upon a particularly inhospitable shore, and at the same time it tossed the cap'n playfully. It dropped him upon a rock thatched with slippery seaweed. He clutched the streaming tresses of the weed frantically. Then the sea tore him away, the weed pods popping between his fingers.

Once or twice he got his knees upon the rock, digging hard for a hold. With a merry bellow, the surge swashed over him and swept him back into the caldron. It was the play of cat and mouse. The sea gulls squalled hideous cachinnation over his head as he struggled. It seemed laughter almost human. This brutal toying, this bird laughter made the cap'n furious rather than frightened.

A master mariner with thirty years' experience of the sea behind him is en-

titled to feel rancorous disgust at being manhandled by boulders, guffawed at by billows, and squalled at by gulls. He tore off more seaweed, swallowed more brine, and did more kicking in the smother, fiercely determined to turn the laugh.

He reflected, even in his stress and misery, that he had acted like a land-lubber anyway, in trying to make a landing there. A cove had attracted him, but a hidden boulder had wrecked his yawl twenty feet off shore. He was in and under before he had time to remember that a sailorman ought to be governed by considerations other than a mere desire to hurry upon dry land.

All at once he heard something beside the roar of waves and screaming of gulls. It was the hoot of a human voice. He was tossed upward in the spume, and, with misty eyes, saw a man standing on a rock beyond the reach of the waves.

"Finished your swim? Want to come in?" shouted the stranger.

Even in his desperate straits, the cap'n could see that the inquirer was merely politely interested.

Cap'n Sproul shot out a "Yes" before another wave engulfed him, and

went down with a fresh object for rage. When he was able to clear his eyes again, he saw the man making his leisurely way toward some kind of a vehicle on the beach road. His saunter, the easy calm of his back, conveyed a disinterestedness that was absolutely maddening to a man in wicked dilemma.

Anger gave the cap'n a new lease of strength. He dove at the boulder, got his fingers into a crevice, and managed to hold on when the next seventh roller tried to tear him loose. Then before the sea could marshal might for a fresh clutch, he climbed upon the rock. He leaped toward the shore, and fell with his knee wrenched under him, and then struggled and rolled up away from the water, one leg useless from the strain.

Sitting on the first dry rock he reached, he gazed balefully through weed that matted his hair and beard, meditating upon the proper kind of language to use in expressing himself to the languid individual who was now ambling back with a rope in his hand.

"Why didn't you say you didn't need any help?" inquired the volunteer. "Then I wouldn't have bothered to paw my goods over to get this rope."

He fanned his hand at a van that stood some distance up the beach.

The cap'n cuffed some of the seaweed off his face, removing a portion of his resemblance to a merman. He stared the stranger over, up and down his gaunt length, then back to his face, where two little blue-button eyes were set closely to a nose that had a flat end pushed awry like a boomerang curve.

"Look-a-here," he choked, "give me your name and address. I want to get a life-savin' medal to you by return mail."

"Whynot Buker," said the other, without resenting the tone.

"I don't know why not!" barked the cap'n. "Don't you start in askin' me questions. You answer mine!"

"My name is Whynot Buker. You can see it painted on my cart, there. And if you never heard of me, you must have come sailing in from for-

eign parts. Dickerer and dealer—handling everything from heifers, hosses, and hardware to hymn books and hosannas. You need a suit of dry clothes and a box of paper collars." He examined the cap'n critically. "I've got a secondhand suit, taken in trade, that will fit you. Other goods as needed, for spot cash. Reasonable prices."

"What do I look like, anyway?" Cap'n Sproul demanded indignantly. "As though I was out shoppin'?"

"You look as though your business might be observationist," retorted Mr. Buker, plainly stung by the cap'n's rancor.

"What's that?"

"Lookin' around daytimes to see what you can steal when it comes night."

Cap'n Sproul promptly tried to get up, but sank back on his rock with a yelp of pain.

"Look-a-here, whatever's your name," he snapped, "I've set here wringing wet and talked to you just as long as it's healthy or helpful. I want to get to somewhere where there's a train of cars runnin' through. And I want you——"

"That's twenty miles. Tariff a dollar a mile. Sandy going, and I've got all the load I want."

"I'll see you bullywhooped to the back door of Tophet before I'll pay any such price, you bat-nosed land shark!"

"Suit yourself," replied Mr. Buker, proceeding methodically to carve a liberal chew of tobacco. "It takes two to make a trade, and trading's my business. Mebbe you'd rather keep on swimmin'."

He clacked his knife blade shut, and turned to go.

"Do you mean to say you'd leave me here?" bleated the cap'n, writhing up and standing on one leg. "Can't you see what a pickle I'm in? A man that's been through the trouble I've been in for two or three days can't stand it to have much more piled onto him."

"What kind of trouble?"

"That ain't any of your business."

"Probably not," agreed Mr. Buker, starting away again. "Well, this ain't making profit. I'll be getting to where there's business."

Cap'n Sproul took a despairing look up and down the road. It was a lonely thoroughfare. It was borne in on him that a night in the open in those wet clothes was no fit plight for an elderly man. He dragged out his soggy wallet.

"Take it, you infernal robber," he shouted, flapping two wet tens at the man. "Take it! I was goin' to put it into a medal for you, but you might as well have it this way."

Mr. Buker took them, and stuffed them away gingerly.

"You'll have to lay on top of the van," he mused. "There ain't any room for you to set beside me. And if you lay on the van in those wet clothes, you'll start the paint, and you're apt to leak through onto the goods. I figure there ain't any way but you'll have to take that ten-dollar suit off my hands at a special cut rate of eight dollars."

Cap'n Sproul did not resent this further piracy except with muttered anathema. The breeze was searching his wet clothes, and he was beginning to think about his rheumatism. Mr. Buker brought the secondhand suit, and patiently propped him while the transfer was made.

"Now," proceeded Mr. Buker, after he had carefully tucked away the price, "next step is to know your name, place of residence, how you happened to be in the scrape you're in. I have to protect myself, and make sure I ain't transportin' desperate criminals from one part of the country to another."

"I've paid you to haul me to a railroad station," blazed the cap'n. "Paid enough for a haul to New York and back. Now, you go ahead and haul. I ain't goin' to be fooled with any longer. If I had two legs under me there'd be less of this than there is."

"No trade is binding with a desperate criminal," stated Mr. Buker, with decision. "I'm a man that's known, and I have to be careful. If you can prove you ain't a desperate criminal, our trade stands as it is. Otherwise, trade is busted, and cash is forfeited."

Cap'n Sproul gazed at the twisted nose, and the foxy face, and the beady eyes, and understood that, in his present plight of helplessness, there was nothing to be gained in expressing his seething opinions regarding the general character of Whynot Buker. He



Once or twice he got his knees upon the rock.

choked hard, and forced himself to remember that he had one leg out of commission, and was twenty miles from a railroad station, and had been through desperate adventures enough in the past few days.

So he braced himself by clinging to the tire of a wheel, and admonished Mr. Buker by wagging the other hand at him.

"This is the last cable that's goin' to be coiled. You take that warnin' from me. My name is Sproul, and I went to the seashore for rest and relaxation, and I got shanghaied onto an old tin dipper of a brig, and I got away, and now I'm here, and money is paid over,

and you go ahead and help me to get up onto the quarter-deck of this old dicker-doodle of a cart of yours, or I'll proceed to find out what I can do to you with one leg and two fists. If you don't recognize a man that's been through hell, and has got well het up and dangerous, then you take a look at me and make sail!"

"What did you call my van?" inquired Mr. Buker, with prompt interest.

"I've got something to think about besides remembering what I say when I'm mad," snapped the cap'n.

"I think you said 'dicker-doodle,' Sproul, that's a flash of real genius. You and me is going to be closer after this. You're a bright man, and I can see it! Inspiration sent that name to you. It's a combination that tells the whole story. Here! Give me your foot. Set it right into my hands! I can boost you all right that way."

He suddenly became garrulous and friendly. He elevated the groaning cap'n to the roof of the cart, and climbed up to the driver's seat, and started his horses.

"I've been trying to think up a name to paint on here ever since I had this van built."

He turned his head, and stared at his passenger admiringly.

"And you come along and toss one right out at me offhand. Original and telling the whole story. 'Buker's Dicker-Doodle.' 'Here comes Buker's Dicker-Doodle.' Or, 'Buker's Dicker-Doodle is due—save all your trades for him!' It's the name, the trade-mark, the happy thought that do business nowadays. Look at the fortunes that have been made that way. Just Buker's peddle cart doesn't mean anything. No snap to it. Nothing different. But Dicker-Doodle! I'll have 'em singing a song about it."

He beamed into the glowering face of Cap'n Sproul. That eminent philologist did not seem to be displaying much enthusiasm in his triumph. He scowled back at Buker with an expression that was frankly one of disgust at what seemed to be nonsense.

"Dicker. That's Buker. Ready to swap anything from a reputation to a red hole. Doodle! Now you're wondering how that part fits. Listen! That part can talk for itself."

With a grin that twisted his nose still more awry, he leaned forward and pulled a lever beside his brake car. There came a grinding and a wheeze in the bowels of the cart, and then the barrel-organ strains of "Yankee Doodle."

"Geared to the ex," explained Mr. Buker. "My own patent. 'Yankee Doodle,' the great American tune. Brisk, breezy, and stands for business and enterprise. Makes you think of hustle right off—that tune does. They've all got me associated with the tune in these parts. The children run into the house singing the verse I've made up."

He hummed to himself to pitch his voice at the key of the organ, and then trolled lustily:

"Oh, here comes Buker riding high
With goods for the whole caboodle.
Tiptoe, Nancy, sell and buy
To the tune of Yankee Doodle."

"Pretty good, hey?" he inquired, leering shrewdly at the cap'n. "See now, don't you, why that name 'Dicker-Doodle' fits this cart? It's inspiration, just as I've told you. If you had hollered that at me when we first met, you'd have got this ride cheaper. I should have felt that much different towards you."

"If that cussed foolishness suits you as well as that," grumbled Cap'n Sproul, "you can hand me back one of those ten-dollar bills."

"You take business," chided Mr. Buker, "take business where a trade has been sealed, bound, tied up, and set away on the shelf, and then go to taking off the shelf and untying and making over, and where'd business be? They can't have that to say of Buker after he's gone to play 'Yankee Doodle' on a golden harp, that he broke business rules. A clear record—that's what is going to follow me when I die."

"Have the record printed on something that will stand the heat well," ad-

vised the cap'n. "Otherwise, you won't have anything to show to old Cap Kidd when he and you get into a braggin' match."

"I'm feeling like using you right and liberal from now on, Sproul," warned his charioteer, "but I ain't any kind of a hand to swallow slurs. There's more'n nineteen miles left in this cruise yet."

Cap'n Sproul, shifting his aching knee to a more comfortable position, preserved gloomy silence, digesting that threat. The organ jiggled away at its everlasting tune accompanied by the drone of Mr. Buker's voice. The cap'n was forced to note that he was composing and rehearsing a new verse. The iteration, the recasting, the trial of the new and the rejection of the old was a maddening process. Cap'n Sproul was obliged to listen to the work, for Mr. Buker was a strictly vocal poet. And beneath him the organ gasped and wheezed and kept up that never-ending tune.

"I want you to listen to this," declared Buker at last, just as though the cap'n had not been driven desperate already by the throes of composition that he had been compelled to overhear.

"Mister Buker, how do you,
Tydle-dyde oodle,
Give such trades as you do do
From the doors of Dicker-Doodle?"

"I've vamped in that second line," stated the poet critically. "I hain't got it to suit me yet. Say, I'll let you throw in one there. The way you named this cart shows you're quick at such things."

"I've been ashamed of certain actions of mine in times past, but it will never be chalked up against me that I ever got down low enough to make up poetry," snarled the cap'n. "Now, if you've got that thing made up to suit you, or if you haven't, shut off that devilish jew's-harp. I'd rather hear a nor'east gale fife'n the cripples' march on the bunghole of a scuttle butt."

"Music soothes the savage breast," affirmed Mr. Buker. "It may have some effect on you. And this is my cart, and I like that tune." He touched

up his horses, and went on rehearsing his new stanza.

"I've navigated on some few quarter-decks in my life," mused Cap'n Sproul savagely, "but this beats the burnin' one that the boy stood on. Say, look-a-here, you! Have you got an axe in your stock?"

"Axes a specialty. Two-fifty per," returned Mr. Buker briskly.

"What will you take for that melodeum, me to have possession as soon as cash is paid over?"

"Instrument bein' a pet of mine, trade-mark and notification that Buker is coming, is not for sale."

They went dragging along the sandy road that now led away from the beach and its barren loneliness through cultivated stretches that hinted they might soon see human habitations. It was a real relief to the cap'n when Buker halted at the hail of a man who had steered a skinny horse to one side of the road and was sitting in his wagon and waiting. The nerve-racking strains of "Yankee Doodle" ceased, and Cap'n Sproul muttered some profane words indicating joy.

"You don't seem to be teamin' anything that's got pedigrees laid down in the dictionary, this trip, perfesser," remarked the stranger, pointing the butt of his whip at the sorry equines that were hitched to the van.

"You take hosses as willing and interested and high-strung as them are," insisted Buker, "and you can't keep the meat on 'em. I find they are too high-strung for my business."

"This one I'm drivin'," said the man, "matches that nigh one of yours better'n the one you've got there. I'm willin' to talk shift with you."

Mr. Buker crawled from his seat, and began to examine the horse, poking certain puffy bunches on his legs, regarding the hollows above his eyes critically, and pushing the lip away from his yellow teeth.

"How old do you call him?"

"Just nine."

"With them hay teeth in that shape?" yelled Buker.

"Well, the feller I just shifted with



"I've paid you to haul me to a railroad station," blazed the cap'n. "Now, you go ahead and haul."

marked down his age for me," hedged the owner. "Lemme see!" He pulled an envelope from his pocket, and pretended to find the figures. "I was wrong—wrong just one year. He's exactly ten."

"Do you think I've dickered hosses up and down this section for twenty years to be took in that way?" demanded Buker indignantly. "I tell you, that hoss—"

Cap'n Sproul had always entertained sailor's hatred of a horse, and for horse swappers his disgust was boundless. And night was coming on, and he knew that many miles separated him from that railroad station.

"See here, Buker," he hailed, "you've got your money for my passage, and I'm in a hurry, and I don't propose to

hang up along the road and listen to any arguments about the ages of a couple of old Methusalums of pelters."

The stranger stood on tiptoe and peered up at Cap'n Sproul, who made no very imposing appearance in his ready-made, secondhand suit.

"Emp'ror or just plain king?" he asked Mr. Buker, with interest.

"Mermaid's husband that's eloping, is the best I can make out of it," stated Buker. "I happened along as he was floating in on the beach, and took him aboard. But I want you to get down to business about that hoss." He turned his back on the furious cap'n.

"Ten years! Tack on five more."

"Well, he ain't over eleven."

"I'll bet ye, and leave it out!"

"Say, look here, Buker, I know

something about a hoss myself. But I'm willin' to be liberal in any estimate I make. I'll say this: That hoss is twelve at the outside—understand, at the outside!"

Mr. Buker sneered.

"Well, then, thirteen—thirteen! Have it your own way. Thirteen, but thirteen to the *ex-tent*. Understand that! To the *ex-tent*! You and me is goin' to have trouble if you pass the lie to me more than five times."

"If you'll drive the skewed bowsprit of that bean-eyed hyena round to the other side of his face, I'll hand you five dollars," announced the cap'n, marooned by his disability but welcoming signs of conflict.

"Say, I don't know who you be nor where you've come from, nor I don't give a cuss where you're goin' to," stated the man appealed to, "but I don't propose to have you buttin' into a hoss trade that I'm carryin' on with my friend Buker. Shut up, and stay shut!"

Both of them glared at him, and then went apart by themselves. At the end of a half hour, they had settled details of the trade, and the horses were transferred.

Mr. Buker climbed up to his seat and lifted the reins. The stranger crawled into his own wagon, and the two sat and looked at each other for a full minute.

"Well, we've shifted," remarked the stranger.

"Shift it is," assented Buker. "And no come-back."

"Then let's be honest. Has this hoss got any dangerous outs?"

"Not till he trots," confided Buker. "Then he's apt to blow a lung out."

The stranger fished in his pockets, hopped to the ground, and bent a bit of strap iron over the nostrils of the horse.

"I'm always prepared for a breather," he said calmly.

"I've been honest. Now *you* be," pleaded Buker.

"You've got one of the notional kind."

"I've never seen a notional one I couldn't start with that gad," stated Mr.

Buker, pointing to a stout ash cudgel stuck in the whip socket.

"If you can pick up a trade in a secondhand derrick and a pair of iron reins that won't bend when you push on 'em, they'll help the gad some," advised the other, and he steered his new horse around the van and went on his way.

The "Dicker-Doodle" resumed its slow progress. Mr. Buker halted a mile farther on at a house, and conducted extended negotiations with a snappish woman who desired to swap rags into tinware. When dusk fell, having less than a half mile more to his credit, he was just completing the purchase of two cows for goods and cash. The haggling over the value of the goods had eaten up much time.

Cap'n Sproul slid himself to the rear of the van, and scowled down on Mr. Buker, who was engaged in attaching his new purchases to the axle by tow lines.

"An interesting business, this is of mine," remarked Buker confidentially. "A fellow that was sharp enough to make a millionaire of himself on Wall Street would starve following this line. It ought to be a liberal education for you to see me operate. That feature alone of this trip ought to be worth twenty dollars. A man can take my system and go into the city and get rich in six months. I've thought of doing it myself."

"You ain't thought particklerly about gettin' me to that railroad station," retorted the cap'n, trying to control his tones. "I've paid my good money for passage. What I've been gettin' is hoss-swap talk, lathered over with 'Yankee Doodle.' We're more'n fifteen miles from where you started out to take me. I ain't in very good fighting trim, Buker, I'll own up, but if you keep on much longer this way you'll find you're monkeyin' with something worse than a daminite bumb."

"I'd be ranked up high as a business man if I went through this section turnin' down every bargain I saw, just so I could get a side-line passenger on board the cars, now, wouldn't I?" in-

quired the master of transportation. "You talk as though you'd paid fare on a limited express."

He climbed to his seat, and clapped the reins. The new horse had been staring around with ewe neck nearly double, watching the making fast of the cows. His red eyes expressed resentment and rebellion. At the first flourish of the reins he sat down on his haunches in the attitude of a dog.

"Notional, hey?" mused Mr. Buker, aloud, stroking his wry nose. "I'm a little that way myself."

He plucked the ash stick from its socket, and tested the point of the brad. Then he reached down and jabbed. The horse arose promptly. He stood on his forelegs and drove both hind hoofs at his owner with a nimbleness that showed much practice. Mr. Buker escaped the blow with equal nimbleness, and scuttled back beside Cap'n Sproul. The horse kicked once or twice more, and sat down again.

"This end seems to be a little extrý notional, but a hoss has two ends," stated the owner.

He slipped down from the van, flourished his stick, and made a grab for the horse's head. The animal stood on his hind legs, and struck out with his forefeet like a crazy boxer. Mr. Buker leaped backward so quickly that he fell sprawling in the dust. Then he got up and stood at one side, and regarded his new purchase with interest. The horse was sitting down again.

"Both ends notional, and extrý notional, at that!" he said, fingering his brad.

"Buker, I've got a leg that ought to be 'tended to, and I'm hungry, and I've got rheumatism comin' on," pleaded the despairing cap'n. "If you can't do any better, hitch in the cows and tow the hosses. Let's get to somewhere."

"We can just about get to where we are. There ain't anything sensible that you can do with a hoss that's got both ends notional."

"Meanin' that you're leavin' me settin' on top of this old goose pen for the night?" roared Cap'n Sproul.

"I've got one hoss that ain't notional.

I'll unhitch t'other one, and we'll manage to drag up the road a piece to the tavern."

"You get me somewhere to a hoss, a man, and a wagon, and I'll say good-by to you, and I won't wet any handkerchiefs doin' it."

"I've taken the contract to haul you to the depot, and I'm goin' to do it," insisted Mr. Buker. "You ain't goin' to have any chance to call on *me* for rebate. You start in tryin' to hire any one else, and I'll post you as a fugitive from justice, and they'll believe me, and you'll get snarled up and well advertised. You don't know me yet. I'm desperate when I get started."

The cap'n reflected with alarm that country constables are always ready to believe the worst, and he wondered how he could ever face society if this predicament got into the newspapers. To get home quietly was his single aim. He groaned, swore under his breath, and was silent while Buker unhitched the notional equine.

It was a feat attended with enough difficulty to interest even Cap'n Sproul's baleful attention. But Mr. Buker, with club and anathema, finally convinced the horse that his notional prejudices had been acceded to. He hitched the animal behind where he could trail with the cows, and, by supporting the pole, enabled the other horse to struggle down a slope into a small village. While he stabled his live stock, he left the cap'n sitting on the van nursing his rage; it was evident that Buker, in the list of his charges, set him a notch below two cows and a balky horse.

He suggested as much to Buker when that worthy helped him to slide down from the van. Mr. Buker stepped away, and left his passenger clinging by one hand to the dusty rim of the wheel, balancing on one foot.

"The Bible says a merciful man is merciful to his beasts," insisted Mr. Buker, "and I ain't going back on the Bible at my time of life. Now, Sproul, time is money with me, and business stands for both. I've got things to attend to around here, and you'll have to take care of yourself. To take care of



At the first flourish of the reins he sat down on his haunches in the attitude of a dog.

yourself you'll need crutches. I've got a bargain in a pair for two-fifty."

He opened the rear doors of the van, and brought out the articles after a moment of rummaging.

"Well, hop, then!" he advised, checking the cap'n's objurgations, and making ready to replace the crutches. A hungry man, who hears the chink of dishes within a tavern; a weary man, who longs for a bed, cannot be expected to haggle long over the price of the means of locomotion.

Cap'n Sproul bought the crutches.

His first impulse when he hobbled

into the tavern fore room was to order a horse and wagon instead of his supper, but the basilisk gaze of Mr. Buker reminded him of that threat of exposure, and he restrained himself. It was apparent that Mr. Buker did not propose to share the profits of a good thing with any one else.

He briskly monopolized the conversation in the tavern office while supper was being prepared for these belated arrivals, and the dozen men who were loafing there paid little or no attention to the melancholy Cap'n Sproul. They seemed wholly engrossed and

much impressed by Mr. Buker's ready flow of business talk, and by the time supper was announced he had made them subscribe to his doctrine that any man can get rich if he's only willing to take a chance at the right time.

At the supper table, when they were alone in the dining room, Mr. Buker genially continued his discourse to the sullen cap'n.

"Business, business, that's my motto—business all the time. Some men, striking this place after dark, with a balky boss and an incumbrance in the passenger line, would have set down and growled about hard luck, and lost a whole evening of business in just loafing. Now, look at how I operated out there! I've got those men into a business spirit. Got 'em looking alive for the main chance. Got 'em ready to take a chance. You can't ever do business till you get men into that state of mind. They're just in a ripe condition now for business. I don't know yet what business I'll put up to 'em, but they're ripe."

"So's a man when you've got him tied up and are ready to pick his pockets," said the cap'n, sawing vengefully at a tough steak.

"In business, when you see a favorable field, keep it plowed and fertilized," went on Mr. Buker, ignoring the thrust. "You never know when you'll want to toss seed into it. Now, I've got that field out there all ready for seed. A crop will grow on it mighty quick. I'm a genius, Sproul, when it comes to planting seeds. Dozen or so men sitting out there! Sitting in a peculiar state of mind! If it was morning, I could sell 'em anything from a harrow to a hoot for help. But it ain't morning. It's night, when the cares of the day are past, and the human mind needs something in the way of spice. Entertainment, relaxation, a little kicking up of the heels! And yet, business can be combined by them that know how to combine it."

He pointed to a dark corner of the room, where a black cat was skylarking about in strange fashion.

"Even the cat has to have her even-

ing relaxation. Dumb beasts ain't so much different from humans. We all have to loosen up, and evening seems to be the time."

"Say, you see here!" broke in Cap'n Sproul. "I'm tryin' to eat a little supper in peace. There ain't any sense in what you're talkin', and it's just a noise that takes my appetite away. And if you feel like havin' some evenin' cavortin' and want some one to cavort with, go over and join in with that cat. There don't seem to be much difference in your dispositions."

Buker jumped up from his chair so suddenly that the cap'n, for one astonished moment, thought the advice had been accepted. For the owner of the "Dicker-Doodle" darted to the corner where the cat was playing and tossing some object, and after a brief skirmish with the indignant feline, succeeded in getting away her plaything. He tucked the object into his trousers pocket before the cap'n could see what it was, and came back to the table. The cat sniffed and meowed lonesomely, seeking about the dark corner for her plaything.

"More of that enterprisin' business of yours, I presume," growled the disgusted cap'n. "Got so enterprisin', have you, that you can't let a cat hang onto her own property? Well, me and the cat can sympathize, that's all!"

He secured his crutches, and limped out of the room. Mr. Buker followed.

"Sproul," he remarked loftily, "a man like you that ain't a genius in business can't be expected to judge geniuses when you see 'em. And as for the inspiration that comes to a genius in business, you wouldn't know the difference between it and a tune on a fife."

When he was back in the hotel office Mr. Buker bought a round of five-cent cigars with great display of munificence, and entered again into his disquisition on business. Cap'n Sproul found an old newspaper and began to read it, trying to forget the hateful Buker and his own troubles, and the pain of his wrenched knee.

After a time it was suddenly borne in upon him, in spite of his inattention,

that Mr. Buker was arriving at something decidedly concrete in his business talk. The man who sat next to Cap'n Sproul was counting money on his knee, and Mr. Buker was licking a lead pencil and putting down names and amounts. The cap'n glanced around, and saw that all the men in the room were hauling out their wallets.

"Let me repeat," Buker was saying, "the plan is as old as the pyramids, and dates back before old Nebuchadnezzar chewed grass. A cat was worshiped in Egypt in the old times. There ain't any animal that's more impartial and wiser'n a cat is. Dice can be loaded, cards be stacked by them that knows how, but a cat's mind is all her own, and you can't reckon on it. So I say it's the fairest proposition that was ever put up to a crowd of gents that want a fair show and no odds. Twenty dollars from each one in the pool—and pool takes two hosses, two cows, and goods, reservin' only the celebrated 'Dicker-Doodle'; that is my trade-mark. Can't let that go, but everything else goes."

Mr. Buker did not seem to relish the fact that the cap'n had laid down his newspaper, and was eying him so intently.

"Place money with the landlord," directed Buker. "Same to be delivered when the cat has done her work." He turned to the tavern keeper with sudden, well-disguised innocence. "Of course, you have some kind of a cat around the premises, haven't you?"

"Got a black one around here somewhere," said the landlord.

"Exactly what is wanted—a black cat," cried Mr. Buker, with enthusiasm. "Black is the mystic color in cats. Any book on the subject will tell you that a black cat is more cool, calm, and level-headed than any other kind. Place all money with the landlord."

"I wasn't looking when she come into the wind on this new tack," muttered the cap'n to the man nearest him. "What is this, highway robbery breakin' out in a new place in that critter, or a collection for foreign missions?"

"Raffle," said the man. "New kind. Goin' to let the cat settle it. It certain-

ly is a new idee for startin' your sportin' blood. That perfesser is a genius, that's what he is, when it comes to new schemes!"

"Cat settle it!" repeated Cap'n Sproul, mystified.

"Sure! We all chip in, set in a circle around this room, landlord drops the cat in the middle of the floor, and the first man she comes to and hops on—one movin' a finger to coax her—why, he lugs off the pot. Perfesser puts in his stuff for advertisin' purposes and to grease the pot—and that's the most liberal proposition I was ever up against. Better come in!"

"A cat," echoed the cap'n. "Cat does it, hey?" He bored Mr. Buker with eyes that made that promoter flinch. "Black cat, too!" He got his crutches under him, and hobbled across the room to where Buker stood, busy with his names and figures. "Black cat, hey?" he grunted. "Buker," he whispered hoarsely, "what was it you took away from that cat?"

Mr. Buker glared at him, and went on with his figures.

"What have you got in your pants pocket?" insisted the cap'n.

"I'm only lettin' gents into this—no room for rovers that come from nowhere and seem to be going nowhere," cried Buker loudly. "You go sit down, and keep out of what you ain't wanted in."

"The more the merrier," called one of the men. "It's money that talks, providin' he's got the twenty."

Cap'n Sproul lurched closer to his victim. Unwarily, Buker clapped his hand against his lower waistcoat pocket and as quickly flipped his hand away again.

"Holler pickpockets, and a jay will slap his hand on his wallet," had always been a favorite apothegm of Hiram Look, Cap'n Sproul's old circus friend. The cap'n stole a furtive glance downward. He saw something suspicious protruding slightly over the edge of the pocket.

"Here's the cat, gents," cried the landlord, coming in with the struggling feline under his arm.



He dropped the cat in the middle of the floor.

For an instant Buker looked in that direction. In that instant, Cap'n Sproul nipped between thumb and forefinger the wee thing that dangled from the pocket. He yanked. He met the returning gaze of Buker, eye to eye. But in his broad fist he was clutching what touch informed him was a dead mouse. He hopped away toward the landlord, discarding his crutches so that he might have his hands free.

"I reckon I'll get into this raffle," he said.

He pulled out his wallet, and extracted two tens that were still damp from the sea.

"I told you to stay out," cried the promoter, still unaware that the cap'n had picked his pocket.

"Why?" inquired Cap'n Sproul menacingly. "Tell this party why, and if you've got any good reason I'll step out."

Buker was silent. It occurred to him suddenly that the cap'n would not be coming in were he suspicious of fraud.

"Better make it a clear field for all present," advised one of the men. "Let's have the pot a good one."

"Very well," assented Buker grudgingly. "Only I don't know anything about this person, except that I'm tak-

ing him up to the railroad because he can't walk there. And I've taken a dislike to him. But I ain't going to let any personal feeling stand in the way of business and enterprise. You understand the rules, gents. Take your seats around in a circle. Hold your hands on your knees. The man that moves has to get out of the circle."

They took their seats.

Cap'n Sproul, the mouse hidden in his capacious hand, assumed his required posture, and fixed his eyes on Buker. That gentleman, before giving the final order, made a sly dab at his vest pocket. His eyes goggled, and his face whitened. He glanced toward his passenger. Cap'n Sproul was regarding him with eyes like bits of stone set into hard wood.

"As I understand it," said the landlord, clutching the squirming cat, "now down in the middle goes Betsy Ann."

"Hold on a moment," quavered Mr. Buker, his lips trembling, his face gray with anxiety and rage.

"Well, out with it quick," snapped the landlord. "This devilish cat is beginning to claw."

Buker was furtively but frantically feeling himself over.

"I don't like the idea of letting in a stranger like that man I picked up on the road," stammered the raffle manager.

"So far's I can see, he's got the long end of it, and is a good sport for comin' in," objected the landlord. "The cat knows the rest of us, more or less, and don't know him."

"My name is Sproul, gentlemen, and I'm high sheriff of the county where I live," stated the cap'n, with dignity, "and if I ain't as good as any cheap boss jockey that ever got up a raffle, I'd like to be told here and now."

He was sorry he had confided that much to them, but in that crisis he proposed to keep his end up with Mr. Buker.

A murmur of indorsement greeted him.

"That's enough for us," said the landlord. "Hold tight. Down goes the referee."

He dropped the cat in the middle of the floor.

For a few moments the ruffled and discomposed feline paid no attention to any one. She sat and licked her fur into presentable shape. Then she gave her face a few scrubs with her fists, and yawned, and gazed about her. Thirteen men in a circle, sitting as quietly as stone images, were staring at her. The cat leisurely took survey of them. She stood up, curved her body downward, and stretched her forward claws far out on the floor.

The cap'n observed with interest that sweat was running down Mr. Buker's face and trickling off the end of that wry nose. Then the cat began to pace about the circle, tail erect and entirely composed. She halted opposite Buker, and the pricklers on her nose twitched. The thirteen in that mystic circle held their breaths. She switched her tail, and seemed about to leap. But after a few moments proceeded on her promenade.

It was with sudden interest that she halted opposite Cap'n Sproul. She began to twitch her tail violently. She mewed plaintively. Then she gathered herself and leaped upon his knee, nosing the hand that clutched the mouse.

"Sheriff wins," shouted the landlord, but a squall from Mr. Buker interrupted him.

"It's a cheat, a fraud! He's stole it!" yelled the promoter. "He's got a mouse in that fist of his."

The cap'n brushed away the cat. He held the dead mouse up by the tail.

"I have," he said quietly, and waited for the clamor to die away.

"And I picked that mouse out of Land-pirate Buker's vest pocket just before this thing started," he said. "Hold on a minute, gents. Acts prove—not words. Landlord, hand that money back to the parties that put it in. And while he's doin' it, here's a word or two about Buker that may interest you."

He began with his escape from the sea, and ended with relating how Mr. Buker had robbed the cat in the dining room.

"You've got your money back—I saw to that much," concluded the cap'n. "I reckon that no one will dispute that the goods in that cart are mine. There's twenty and eight and two-fifty comin' to me. The auction is on—two cows, two hosses, and the goods. Ready for bids."

"I'll make you square—thirty-fifty," said one man promptly.

"Forty," cried the tavern keeper.

"Fifty," faltered Mr. Buker, knowing the value of the property with which he had greased his easy-money proposition.

"Run him up," advised Cap'n Sproul. "Make him remember this flimflam game."

Fifteen minutes later, Buker counted out to the cap'n one hundred dollars, his face white, his hands trembling.

"I'll take a little margin for general wear and tear," stated Cap'n Sproul, "and leave the rest for a banquet to be got up for those present at this party. Thanking you all kindly for a pleasant evenin', and hopin' we'll meet again, I now want to hire a team to take me to

the railroad station. I've got a leg that needs to be looked after."

"Before I order that hitch—and it'll be the best one I've got," said the landlord, "I've got a word to hand to the carrot-nosed polecat that put up this game on my friends here in my own house. You git! You git now! You git lively, or I'll furnish Porty Reek molasses and two pillar ticks full of feathers for this crowd to operate with."

A half hour later Cap'n Aaron Sproul was rolling along the starlit highway in a hack, his leg comfortably propped on the seat in front of him. He was smoking a cigar that the landlord had pressed upon him, and his hand still ached from the grips of good-by.

He passed a dim bulk by the roadside. He looked out to see a kicking horse battering his heels against a splintered van, and heard a man shouting anathema to the stars.

"Well, all things considered, there might be worse ways than this of windin' up a vacation for rest and relaxation," mused Cap'n Sproul, puffing smoke from the hack window.



Return

WHEN I was but a restless child,
Once on a night when leaves were curled
Like brown cocoons, hard-driven and piled
In shivering bundles as they whirled,

The short pale twilight called me out,
A willful thing that sought release,
To run with wild hair whipped about,
Bright eyes that scorned the fireside's peace.

But soon it passed, that roving mood;
The dark was quick with frightful things,
And, oh, the lights of home were good
To one young bird on fluttering wings!

So, True-of-Heart, I tried to stray,
But faltered back in humbler plight,
For love's own hearth fire, good and gay,
Shone through your eyes and lit the night!

JEANNIE PENDLETON EWING.

Jane's Artist.

• BY •
Virginia Middleton



ILLUSTRATED BY R. EMMETT OWEN

IT was Roger himself who introduced Hastings to Jane. Afterward he must often have thought ironically of the spring day when he, secure in his youthful belief in himself and in Jane and in the fair dealing of Destiny toward such manifestly deserving persons, blandly presented the young sculptor to his impressionable fiancée. Jane adored art; she adored it quite honestly, even though she did not hesitate to proclaim the fact—usually an indication of insincerity.

And Roger was as pleased with himself when he persuaded Hastings to take the afternoon train out to Hillton for a game of golf at the club and dinner there, with a hastily summoned Jane and a sister or two, as he was pleased with himself when he was able to bring her an old piece of copper she coveted for her collection, or a rare tulip for the tulip bed which was her particular charge in the Wilcox gardens.

Roger was not an unduly conceited young man. He was, of course, aware that he was as eligible a parti as Hillton had to offer, but he was also aware that Hillton did not limit Jane's area

of choice. He had been very unhappy when, after rejecting him in a conversation of some beauty and tenderness and very slight finality, Jane had gone to Europe two years before. He had been tied down at home, and he had pictured the Old World as an enchanted forest in which the entire male population represented the lions of fable, with Jane their solitary pursuit. However, a grim sort of pride, as well as the exigencies of his father's wholesale coal and iron business—base trade which he was contentedly entering!—kept him on this side of the Atlantic. And that, too, in spite of the fact that one or two of Jane's "sisterly" epistles hinted a desire to see him.

Jane, having miraculously passed unscathed through the perils of proffered coronets, having wonderfully escaped, as Roger firmly believed, the running fire of dukes, earls, counts, and barons, returned to the United States and to Hillton in a year and a half, more desirable than ever. To Roger her bronze hair was more luminous than before, her sun-kissed pink and tan cheeks more lovely, the high light of nobility, and joy, and eagerness in

her blue eyes more alluring, more inspiring. And, marvel upon marvel, she was more accessible. She permitted Roger to hope, and one bright day she crowned his hopes with sudden, sweet surrender.

"Only I am not sure of myself, Roger," she had told him, withdrawing from his possessive embrace. "I am going to be honest with you; it isn't what I expected—love isn't. I always thought it would be a great, sudden light from Heaven, but we—why, we have known each other forever! So if—if——"

"If you ever want to go back on it, Jane," said Roger, "I shan't kick and raise a rumpus. That's what you want to be assured about, isn't it?"

Jane looked at him with dewy eyes. She shook her fair head.

"I know that without your telling me, Roger," she said. "But I want to be assured that you won't—wouldn't—feel too badly?"

"It would be a perfect circus for me, of course," replied Roger ribaldly. "But I'm not worrying about that time. There isn't going to be any such time, Jane, any more than there is going to be a day when I shall come begging you to let me go off in the trail of a siren from the chorus or some other home wrecker."

"But if you ever did want to go, you'd tell me, wouldn't you, Roger? We will always be honest with each other?"

So Jane persisted pleadingly, and Roger had answered seriously enough:

"Yes, I think we had better be. I don't think I should care for a fool's paradise, myself."

But that had been at the beginning of their engagement, which was not destined to be one of those brief, sulphur-match affairs. Jane's mother needed her at home during a period of invalidism that prolonged itself unmercifully, according to Roger's ideas. They drifted into a state of indefinite engagement. It was not altogether unpleasant. It seemed to Roger, despite the warning note that Jane had struck that first day, almost as sanctioned, as

seasoned, as secure as marriage itself. He loved Jane better and better with each passing week—loved her honestly, her young idealism, her sudden, little, unexpected gleams of a wise, elderly sanity that always reminded Roger of her shrewd, finely mellowed father. And he enjoyed the calm intimacy which they had. All that he could do to bring added richness and gayety into Jane's life, he did, not thinking much about it, but acting from the lover's perpetual instinct to lay offerings at his beloved's feet.

And that was how he happened to bring Bernard Hastings out to Hillton; personally, he didn't go in much for art or artists, but Jane, while she was abroad, had developed quite a taste for both, and Roger was lazily willing to gratify her fancies; for the matter of that, he really didn't care for tulips, and one kind seemed to him as stiffly uninteresting as another. But he scoured the spring exhibitions to find tulips for Jane's bed.

It was not a month after he had first presented Hastings to Jane's attention before Hillton had dubbed the young sculptor "Jane's artist." Hillton was a suburb not greatly given to the æsthetics of life; it devoted itself, on its masculine side, to work in the commercial branches, and on its feminine to housekeeping, children, bridge, and gardening. It felt that in being the selected abode of old Doctor Jewett, editor emeritus of *The Christian Survey*, it had established its claim to be considered a suburb of some intellectual pretensions, and it was quite content to see art pass it by.

Art was a very good thing in its way, of course; it gave the women places to stop in on the Avenue on winter afternoons; it formed the infant mind when hung in photographs from the antique, on schoolroom walls; but in the persons of its practitioners it was distinctly to be shunned; Hillton had a deep-seated conviction that their credit was not good in the commercial world.

Jane, of course, had scorned the Hillton point of view with the generous scorn of youth, and, as she thought,

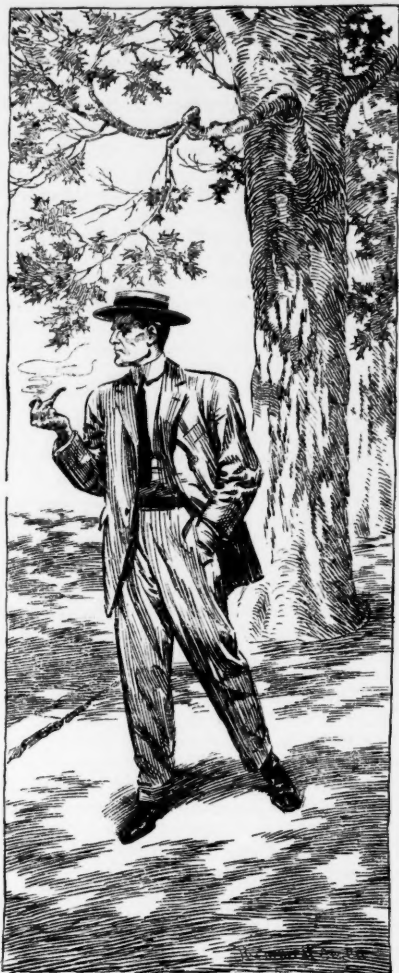
with the educated scorn of a traveled, cosmopolitan human being. She thought that Whistler was the most wonderful man that had lived in a quarter of a century, and she was smitten to honest tears at St. Gaudens' statue of Lincoln.

Even Roger had been brought to admit that there was a difference between that heroic piece of work and a Rogers' group, but Jane had gone forth from its presence silent and throbbing with the sense of greatness, of power, of tragedy. And to Jane, Roger had brought Bernard Hastings as he would have brought a Great Dane pup, had her enthusiasm chanced to lie in the direction of dogs.

Even after Hillton had begun to call Hastings "Jane's artist," it cherished no unworthy suspicions of Jane's fealty to Roger Taylor. It cherished, in short, no unworthy suspicions of Jane's ultimate sanity; of course, she had foolish whims, fads, fancies; she was only twenty-two, and feminine. Look at Hallie Wright, who had gone in for birds until a walk with her at any period except in the deepest sleep of winter was a purgatorial penance. Look at May Webster who had insisted upon learning ballet dancing.

Jane, too, had her notions, but she would get over them; was she not Nathaniel Wilcox's daughter, and had any one within the memory of Hillton ever known Nathaniel Wilcox's reason to fail him at a crucial moment? Was she not engaged to Roger Taylor? What supernatural charm must the man wear who could win her affections from Roger, young, good-looking, kind, and rich? Hillton had no fears for Jane on the score of her artist.

Nor had Jane herself, at first. The engagement to Roger had become such a matter of course, such a dear, pleasant commonplace, that she could not have easily imagined a situation in which he was less to her than he was now. Could she imagine a day when the sun would permanently cease to shine, the old-fashioned breakfast bell to sound from the old-fashioned dining room, the whole kindly, agreeable or-



Once or twice as he walked down the decorous street, he stopped short, and his lips seemed to form the words: "Why, Jane!"

der of things undergo a great revolution? Of course, she admired Mr. Hastings, she told herself. She admired the "courageous stand he had taken in regard to his art. Not every young man, fired, not by vulgar ambition, but by the pure zeal of genius,

would have given up everything for his work.

"So much depends on whether his work justifies the sacrifice," suggested Roger one evening when, two months after her meeting with Hastings, she was descanting upon the subject.

Jane flamed.

"It's not like you to be cynical, Roger," she told him. "It's not like you to measure a man's deeds by his success or failure; it's motive that counts."

"In this brutal world it is results that count. But I don't mean to run down Hastings' work; he may be the legitimate successor of Michael Angelo, for all I know. Somehow, I've always felt that he ought to do something pretty fine to justify his hurting his father so. The mills nearly went to pieces, you know, when the old man had a stroke two or three years back. He had always planned to have Bernard step into his shoes after college and Europe."

"But when Bernard—Mr. Hastings"—she corrected herself with a sudden consciousness—"refused to go into the factory and learn the yarn business, after he had come back from Europe, old Mr. Hastings practically read him out of the family. He has disinherited him."

"I've heard he was a violent-tempered old party. May I smoke?"

"Of course. But doesn't it appeal to you at all—his giving up the certainty of a decent fortune—just for—just for—I know it sounds absurd, but I have to say it—just for art's sake?"

She looked eagerly at Roger filling his pipe on the piazza step.

"If it were for art's sake," he conceded, pushing the tobacco in and not glancing toward her flushed, appealing face. "If it didn't happen to be for indolence's sake, or conceit's. I tell you the yarn business is no child's play of a job; and no man gets asked to soirées on the strength of being in it. Why, Jane!" For, raising his eyes at the end of his pipe-filling operation, he saw how flushed, excited, even how angry, she seemed.

"It isn't what you try to imply against

him, against Mr. Hastings, that I mind," she declared sputtering. "It isn't that. It is only that I hate to think you are the sort of man who cannot appreciate a fine action!"

"Why, Jane!" Roger reiterated his exclamation. It sounded stupefied the second time.

Jane rushed into the house, and he heard her sweeping like a whirlwind up the stairs. He waited for her return, smoking his pipe with a sort of dazed air, but she did not come down again, and by and by he went away, leaving a message for her with a maid. Once or twice as he walked down the decorous street, maple-shaded, quiet with the mid-afternoon peace of a summer day, he stopped short, and his lips seemed to form the words: "Why, Jane!"

Meantime Jane, fevered and ashamed in her own room, did not quite dare to question herself as to the meaning of her outbreak. When the matter clamored at the door of her reason for a lucid explanation, she told herself fiercely that she had been honest in what she had said to Roger; she had been hurt, affrighted, by his inability to perceive the nobility of Bernard Hastings' course. That was all—one demands, if one is an idealist, that one's fiancé shall rise to heights of appreciation with one.

She remembered, rather hating herself for the obtrusive recollection, how full of admiration for Roger was Bernard Hastings. There had been no weighing in the balance with him, no talk of results.

"One of the finest men I know, Miss Wilcox," he had said enthusiastically—it was before he had begun to call her "Jane"—"one of the very finest. Clean cut, energetic, direct, and instinctively good. Oh, a strong fellow—one of the kind that makes nations!"

She had been warmed and thrilled by this unstinted praise of Roger's simple virtues. Raising her eyes to thank Hastings with a look, she had met his own more squarely, more intimately than ever before. His gaze had held hers almost uncomfortably long. He

had sighed, as he finally released her from the second's bondage.

"A woman must be happy with a man like that!" he had said. "They are the kind made to make women happy, to keep them secure, beloved, protected."

Jane had a poignant pity for him because he was so obviously another sort of man and because he perceived his own unlikeness to the stalwart Roger. For the first time there stole into her veins a drop of the poison that makes romantic women imagine more piercing bliss in a love compounded with sorrow and uncertainty than that in the steadfast love of a strong man.

In two months more Hillton frowned. Jane's artist, it felt, was too frequent a sight upon its well-kept streets.

"If he's given up such a lot to be free to devote himself to his art," said Hillton contemptuously, "why doesn't he go ahead and devote himself to it? Jane Wilcox isn't art. The Hillton Country Club isn't art. Who proposed him for membership, anyway? What does Roger mean? Why doesn't he put a stop to it? We never did believe in long engagements, anyway!"

Hastings, every now and then, was at some trouble to explain to Jane why he was not devoting himself more insistently to that art for which he had sacrificed so much, even though he did not take the rest of Hillton into his confidence.

"Work should never be allowed to degenerate into drudgery," he informed her one day. "Creative work, I mean. Of course, if one plants cabbages for market—that is another matter. But genius—talent—mustn't be driven; its great task must be approached solemnly, awesomely, even. It should never be allowed to become a matter of routine, any more than love should become a mere habit."

The closing words should have reassured Jane on the question of his feeling for her; she was certainly a good deal of a habit with him nowadays. Yet she did not find it easy to meet his eyes which she knew were fixed upon her. The pause grew long, pregnant with meaning.

"Look at me, Jane," he commanded her.

They were at the foot of the garden, in the arbor her father and mother had built twenty-five years before. The garden path, bordered in gold, and pink, and blue that dazzled her as she looked, ran straight up to the terrace. Larkspur and marigold, phlox and late lily—how was it possible they could have taken on such blinding glory of color?

"Look at me, Jane," and they wavered before her vision, all the familiar things. She tried to obey him, but before she had made her newly shy eyes look up, she felt his hands close upon hers. She grew dizzy at the touch. The bright array of flowers disappeared—the whole world disappeared, going out in a many-colored blur.

"Jane!" She knew that he must be whispering, his voice sounded so remote. "Jane!" What unexpected melody there was in her plain little name! "Jane, my darling, look at me!"

Then she obeyed him. She saw his face bending over her, pale with emotion. The world swept back upon her. "No, no!" she cried confusedly.

The hold upon her hands tightened.

"Too late to say 'no' now, Jane." His voice sounded sorrowful, but fatalistic. "Too late. We love each other—we love each other," he repeated it solemnly.

"Oh, no, no!" cried Jane, protesting against him and the beating of her heart. "No, no!"

"Let us be honest with each other. Whatever may be the outcome, let us not degrade this hour by denials, by subterfuges. This is not an affair of gallantry, of coquetry, Jane, dearest. Let us be honest!"

With that high call, he conquered her. Her face, white with feeling, her eyes dark with love and pain, confessed for her.

"But I shall never let it—make any difference," she declared. "I shall never hurt any one with it!"

"Only yourself and me? You mean you will not ask Taylor to release you



Roger was down in the Maine woods shooting when the October day dawned when she was to become the sculptor's wife.

from your engagement? You mean that you will spare him the hurt? As if you could! Roger is not so dull as all that would mean, and you are not so passionless, my sweet."

He bent and kissed her. And then Jane knew that never again could another man's lips meet hers without degradation.

"Some men," he told her, when the first moments of miserable joy, of pain, and rapture, had passed, "some men would tell you that they would walk out of your life now, that they would leave you free to fulfill your engagement or

to break it. I shall not, Jane. Our love is too high a thing to be unacknowledged. Even if such a sacrifice as the weak sentimentalist would make in our situation were not a crime against love, it would be an insult to Roger's intelligence. Our love came upon us in a moment—our destiny. We must be true to it. It isn't going to be easy, darling; but I have an idea that great love seldom is an easy affair. You must tell him and tell your parents. And always, even in our happiest moments, we will taste the tang of sorrow, remembering his pain. But it must be."

Jane was deeply, if unconsciously, grateful to him for promising her that lifelong touch of remorse, and for not assuring her that Roger would soon "get over it." She liked Bernard's uncompromising severity with the situation, with himself and with her. For the moment she quite lost sight of the fact that, severity notwithstanding, Bernard was arranging to have exactly what he wanted.

The interview with Roger was a less tragic affair than the one with Bernard. She suffered intensely before it began, but it left her with an almost angry sense of relief. Roger had come in in the evening and she was waiting in the library for him. Her father was upstairs with her mother; she could hear the low hum of their voices, punctuated by an occasional laugh. How much, she wondered, did they love each other? And had theirs been a high, inexorable passion, or a casual affair of every day? But before she had decided, Roger had been announced and had come smiling into the room.

As the maid withdrew, shutting the door behind her, he drew near her with the obvious intention of kissing her. Jane stood up, every nerve in her body protesting; there was something so desperate, something so wild, in her tense attitude and her white face, that it brought Roger to sudden pause, drove the smile from his pleasant face.

"What is it, Jane?" he asked.

A laugh from the invalid's room upstairs told him that whatever tragedy had Jane in its grip, it was not a family one. And, knowing that, he knew almost enough. The "What is it?" was the question demanded by the situation, not by his ignorance. An intuition as relentless as a woman's was vouchsafed him in that moment.

"Oh," cried Jane, in a muffled voice, "how you will hate me! How you will despise me!"

Her self-accusation restored him to his normal state. He took her hand, smiling again, and led her to a seat.

"Never that, Jane, dear," he answered lightly. "Sit down and tell me all about it. May I smoke?"

Jane was young; the question filled her with a sudden sustaining scorn of him. A man who wanted his wretched, cheap sedative at the crisis of his life! A man who, face to face with renunciation, asked to smoke! She need not fear to hurt such a one unbearably. She did not guess that he grasped at that one chance of occupation as the drowning man at the straw; she looked at him almost contemptuously as, in response to her nod, he began to roll a cigarette.

"Well," he reminded her, when his telltale fingers had something upon which to hide their tendency to quiver, his eyes something at which he could look, "well, you were accusing yourself of crime?"

"Don't be flippant about it all, Roger," she entreated him. "This is serious—so miserably serious."

She fell silent again. Roger took one whiff of his cigarette, absentmindedly threw it away, and began the manufacture of another.

"You know how we said we should tell each other the truth, no matter what it cost in pain, you remember —" she begged him.

"Yes, yes, Jane." He was almost rough, almost impatient. Then he pulled himself together. "You don't have to remind me of that, sweethe— Jane, I—can I help you to tell it? Has the 'great, sudden light from Heaven' you used to expect shone for you? Are you and Hastings in love with each other? There, there, dear! Don't feel so! I've—I've seen it coming, Jane. Don't cry, my dear, don't cry."

"But to break your heart," sobbed Jane.

"Oh, my heart is a durable old thing, Jane; it won't break, even if it is pretty badly dented. Hearts don't break easily nowadays. You mustn't think about that part of it. You must only think whether it is the real thing, this time." That faint emphasis on "this time" was the only reproach he permitted himself. "You must only think whether it is for your true happiness—and his," he added as an afterthought.

"Happiness!" Jane had contempt

for the very idea of so trivial a by-product of love and life. But on truth and destiny she was more eloquent. It was no weak seeking after happiness, Roger was given to understand, which actuated her and Bernard; it was the stern demand of their natures for truth that thrust this necessity of breaking Roger's heart upon them—only, of course, he was not going to let his heart break!

"If it were just happiness," said Jane, with a sudden wistful wisdom, "I am not sure, Roger, that I shouldn't have a great deal more of it with you."

"Then why, in God's name," began Roger, his face dark, his voice rough with emotion, "why——"

But Jane stopped him with a rebuke. Truth was their shining star, hers and Bernard's. Truth, in life, in love, in art.

And so, by and by, Roger went out into the sweet dark night, a curious ringing in his ears. And inside the house poor Jane sat weeping and thanking Heaven that she had known two men of such nobility as Bernard and Roger. Roger's variety, of course, was not quite so high as Bernard's; Roger would probably sacrifice less for truth, for principle, for art. But he had a very desirable, workaday sort of nobility of his own, there was no doubt of that!

Bernard's prophetic soul had not misled him as to the attitude of Jane's parents. It was Philistine in the last degree. Mr. Wilcox, who had never before seemed to the young man a mercenary sort of person, had asked brutally: "And are you earning enough to support a wife—I understand that you receive no income from your father?"

Bernard's reply had included some statistics on the income of Rodin from his art, but Mr. Wilcox, with a gentle, annoying persistence, had wanted to know of Bernard's own commissions.

But what did it all matter, except to show his prospective father-in-law to the young man in an unenviable light? Jane was crying for the moon, Jane, Nathaniel's only child, the idol of his heart. He settled a small sum on her

—small by her express stipulation and much to her new fiancée's disgust—and found that her mother was already much improved in health, and that her marriage could take place at once. Roger was down in the Maine woods shooting when the October day dawned when she was to become the sculptor's wife; but he sent them a telegram that was a model of good feeling, and his present, a wonderful piece in silver and copper reft from some ancient Grecian altar, made Bernard exclaim:

"I didn't know he had such taste, Jane. This is a marvel. How did he ever manage to get hold of such a thing? It is going to be the treasure of the studio when we come home."

"When we come home" was now their watchword. They had decided that Bernard's art required the development of further European travel, and Nathaniel, supplementing that modest settlement upon his daughter with a check for a wedding gift, had made it easy for them to indulge his talent in its needs. They were going over for a period of work and study.

"One can live so much more cheaply in Europe," they chanted.

The tiny income which Jane—foolish, impractical Jane!—had fixed for them would be riches in Rome, in Florence. If only Old Man Hastings had shown the feelings of a father at the end, all would have been well. But there was no check among his school-masterly congratulations. He failed before he died two years later. They were in Venice then, and Bernard relinquished his last hope of obtaining something from him.

"Routine did for him," said the sculptor sapiently. "He had no imagination in his work. Even in the yarn business a man must go to the wall who has no imagination, who does not give his soul time to grow."

Jane, looking out of a palace window, sighed faintly. She had a sudden longing for home, for the unimaginative, hard-working men of home, for the commonplace homes and gardens of Hillton. She put the longing into words; she told him the reason for it.



"Think of my trying to be a sculptor!" he said.

"I want my father to hold his grandchild in his kind, old arms," she said, "while it is a tiny baby. Why? Oh, I don't know why. I just do."

Bernard was not deeply interested in that aspect of his coming responsibilities. He didn't want to go home. He assured Jane that he was "just getting" something which his work had always lacked, something without which he would always have felt it a degradation to art to try to undertake any-

thing serious. It was the fountains in the Venetian gardens which were teaching him this valuable something. But when it was borne in upon him that Jane's father would probably make them some allowance for the baby and the additional cost of living in that extravagant America, he consented to return.

Hillton, however admirably adapted to the needs of prosperous merchants, salesmen, brokers, and lawyers, was ob-

viously no place for an artist. The Hastings took an apartment in town, an expensive one near the river; Jane, of course, must know no lack of pure, cool air. They also took a studio, and Bernard remembered his original resolution of giving Roger Taylor's gift a place of honor in it.

When they had added the cost of furnishing these two abodes to the joint rental, it looked very much as though Jane would be obliged to subsist upon the admirable air of Riverside Drive, and Bernard upon high ideals of art. But, happily—one might almost say miraculously—he received a commission to “do” the two children of a woman rich enough to pay for marble portraits of her family; and, besides, old Nathaniel insisted upon paying the furniture bills, and promptly, though a little sadly, increased Jane's allowance.

The baby was born in the old house at Hillton, and Jane looked eagerly, passionately into his little face, hoping there to trace some faint miniature of her father; but it was Bernard's eyes and brow that confronted her. She sighed. Then, remorsefully, lovingly, she infolded the baby with her arm. Remorsefully she told herself that her husband was a good man, a kind man; he was an artist, a true artist, no palterer with the truth in art, no maker of potboilers; all the fault was in her who had been bred to believe that man's first duty was to keep the pot boiling.

When she and the nurse and the young Nathaniel—it had been Bernard's tender suggestion so to name their son—returned to town, he confided to her that he had news which might prove a disappointment to her. He had decided not to model Mrs. Lightfoot's two boys.

“If you had seen them, Jane!” he explained.

“But I have; she is Roger Taylor's cousin, you know. They are not beauties, of course, but—”

“It isn't that I demand beauties,” he interrupted her, frowning. “But your friend Roger's cousin”—he frowned more deeply—“would have demanded beauties made of her two fat, hulking young brutes. If she would have been

content with the truth—with the presentment in clay and marble of the fact that the children of the vulgar rich are overbearing, overfed, under-educated little boors—I could have done the group *con amore*. But that she would not have had. And now that I realize that she is Taylor's cousin, I see, of course, that the commission was a mere question of ‘pull.’ You know how I feel about that, Jane.”

Jane did know, but she no longer knew that she revered his strong, upright point of view as she had once done. She took herself rather sadly to task. Whither had fled her idealism? “Where was it now, the glory and the dream?” Grimly she told herself that she would not, *would not*, begin to doubt her husband's sincerity; it might be natural for her, the daughter of a plain, commercial race, to measure results; it might be natural for a mother to feel the primitive instinct, the primitive insistence, that her mate should provide for her child; but Bernard was an artist; he must hold fast to other standards.

Bernard continued to hold fast to his standards, and did no work; at any rate, no work for which there was a market demand. He indulged in long periods of loafing and inviting his soul, a practice which he justified with all his old eloquence and charm of fervent speech.

Only Jane was no longer charmed. Truth and art—what were they? Was not it the artist's first duty, as it was the shoemaker's, to stand upon his own feet in the world? She did not suffer privation through her husband's devotion to truth—her father prevented that, but she suffered notwithstanding. In spite of resolution, in spite of the utmost exertion of her will, she began to question—not merely Bernard's gift—she had long doubted that—but his honesty. What was it that Roger had said so many years ago: “If it were for art's sake; if it didn't happen to be for indolence's sake or conceit's.” Poor Roger! No, not poor, after all, though he was growing gray now, and lived, and still walked alone! Not

"poor" Roger, for he had strength, self-restraint; he dissipated no energy in words. But had he been right about Bernard that long-gone-by day?

When little Nathaniel was eight years old, the death of both her parents left Jane a rich woman. Bernard was charming about the money—he didn't want a cent of it. It must be wisely invested for the young one; he was heartily glad that Roger had been left an executor with Jane and the family lawyer. He didn't want an extra penny himself—but Jane ought to have her own car now. And a trip to Greece and the Aegean would help her after her grief and bereavement.

So they went to Greece. They were present at the digging of some excavations. Such wonders as came forth from the earth, such bits of marble as not even mutilation could despoil of beauty! Bernard was enraptured and saddened.

"Think of my trying to be a sculptor!" he said to Jane. "Think of my daring—"

Jane's heart failed her at his words. Was the wonderful trip to be an incentive, not to new labor, not to a fresh zest in toil, but to greater idleness? She tried, haltingly, for she had learned silence in these years and it was not easy for her to break through the habit, to reinspire him; she talked the need of each generation for its own interpreters—almost the need of each class in each generation.

"Casuistry, Jane," replied Bernard. "No class, no generation, needs anything less than utter perfection; and here is utter perfection, and we little men go on making futile travesties of beauty!"

Jane was, accordingly, not altogether unprepared for what followed when they went home again. Bernard, with some pomp and ceremony, formally renounced art. He achieved interviews in several of the Sunday papers, in which he expressed himself with admirable humility. It was not his province, of course, to criticise the course of other men; but for himself he had come to realize the actual impiety of going

on with his work. And Monday morning several irate sculptors permitted themselves to be quoted to the caustic effect that it was a pity Mr. Hastings had taken so many years to learn what they could have told him long ago—namely, that he was no artist.

After which Jane, pale and quiet now, had a new stillness upon her. But they lived comfortably and gracefully, and Bernard wrote an occasional art criticism. He began collecting prints also, so that his days were not empty. But one afternoon he stood too long in the slush before an old print shop, and the next day he was in bed with pneumonia.

"Jane, my dear," he said to her when his illness was forty-eight hours old, "I'm not going to get over it. Don't look like that, my poor, sweet wife! But I know—and I want to say something to—you, something I could not say if I were to live afterward."

"There is nothing to say, Bernard, dearest."

"Yes, there is," he insisted. "You must often have wondered all these years—they haven't been unhappy years, Jane?"

"Never, never!" she cried passionately.

"But not happy ones, Jane, not happy ones! Not normal, my dear—you know what I mean; not vigorous on my part, not—ah, not what they should have been. And how you must have wondered all through them whether I was deceiving myself or merely trying to deceive you. Such a poor make-believe of an artist!"

He kissed the fingers she laid upon his lips with a little cry of "Hush, oh, hush, my dear!"

"Such a poor make-believe of an artist," he repeated. "And was I honest or a deceiver? A loafer from principle or merely from choice?" He frowned worriedly. "I want you to know, my dear girl, my dear, patient girl, that as far as I know myself, I was faithful to my light."

He looked at her pleadingly and she stooped and kissed him with a passion of protective love. And when he fell

into a doze it was with her hand clasping his in such a unity as they had not known in many years. Before her vision as she sat watching him there swam another day—a late summer day when all the glory of the old garden had been blurred before her eyes, and the heavens had opened for her.

Of course, to Jane, widowed, not yet old, there came many suitors. But she, like the man who had died, was destined to live faithful to a dream. Even to Roger she said "no."

"There was a time," she told him, "before Bernard died, when I thought it had all been a piece of romantic folly, my marriage. But—I saw it otherwise before the end. And so—dear Roger, my friend—I can't take that happiness you offer. In life—and in art, some of us are decreed to miss complete expression—do you know what I mean?" Roger nodded soberly. "The only thing

one can do is to be faithful to one's dream of beauty or of love."

He nodded again, sadly enough. He wondered if she perceived that he, plain man of no fine-spun theories, was the one of them all who had held most steadfastly to his dream. But he did not ask her.

"How about Nat?" he asked instead. "What are you going to make of him?"

A warm hue of resolution, of animation, flushed Jane's face.

"Ah, how you can help me!" she cried. "I want you to be a sort of unofficial guardian. I want him to be—something practical, Roger. Not an artist—something plain and practical!" And then the swift tears welled into her eyes—tears of pity for the man with whom her dream of life and love had been lived.

"Oh!" she cried again. "I do not mean to be disloyal; but not an artist!"



Santa Claus

THERE'S Little Boy Blue with Bo-Peep over yonder,
Their playthings of Christmas are glamour and gloss;
Sweet spendthrifts of joy, oh, the laughter they squander,
With faces of radiance and eyes filled with wonder!
(And, skeptic, who says there is no Santa Claus?)

And comes a gay maiden with eyes that are jolly,
With cheeks like the damask rose, hair like the floss;
Perhaps it is faith, or it may be but folly,
When she tangles the mistletoe high with the holly.
(But, skeptic, who says there is no Santa Claus?)

The Christmastide bells are replying, replying,
From near and from distant the city across!
Good will on the winds of the morning is flying,
And Love leaps to life where old Hatred is dying.
(And, skeptic, who says there is no Santa Claus?)

And where through the land there's a chancel remaining,
Or where the white altar steps lead to the cross,
With chords of bewilderment, waxing and waning,
What anthems of joy the deep organs are straining!
(Oh, skeptic, who says there is no Santa Claus?)

WILLIAM F. McCORMACK.

A MATTER OF TRUST



BY W.B.M. Ferguson

Author of

"Garrison's Finish," "His Father's Son," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY MAYO BUNKER

STACKPOOL, shrugging, picked up the evening paper, then tabled it.

"What's the matter, Edith?" he asked. "I couldn't help being late. Car blew out a fuse and the subway was blocked—I know it's a poor and ancient excuse."

As if its weight were too great, Edith restlessly pushed back her heavy hair.

"I wish you wouldn't talk that way, Jack. You make me feel so exacting and—and narrow-minded. I wasn't thinking of your being late."

"Then, what's the matter?"

"Oh, nothing."

This naturally meant "everything," and finally it came with a rush.

"I suppose I shouldn't listen to gossip—it's bad form and all that—but Mrs. Bagley called to-day, and—well, she saw you three times with that Count De Croix; for instance, last night in Martin's. I tried not to say anything, but I'm a poor actress and show every thought in my head. It isn't so much your seeing him, though I hate it, but your lack of trust in me. You could have said last night that your 'engagement' was Count De Croix. Instead, I must hear it from a woman I never

liked, and pretend, with her knowing I lied, that I knew it all the time.

"When we were married you read me a homily on the beauties of mutual trust. You affirmed, and I agreed, that it was the only key to true happiness. I have fulfilled my part, but you haven't, and I resent it keenly. I feel as if I could never trust you again, for once we begin to doubt we end with complete disbelief."

"Edith, if you remember, we discussed last year, before our marriage, how much should a husband tell his wife, and vice versa."

"Yes, and I said—everything. It is better to know, even if it hurts, for we then have an opportunity of forgiving."

"That was your New England conscience," said Stackpool. "I yielded to it. Then you added that each had the right to know the other's life prior to our meeting. I didn't believe so. I argued that what's past is past, and that we only are answerable for our actions when they effect others."

"Yes, and I said, Jack, that before a girl gives her life into a man's keeping she has the right to know his past as well as present. That the marriage

ceremony doesn't reincarnate or white-wash us, though a good many think the contrary. The present must always be a reflex action of the past. We have the right to know that past, so that we may better understand the other's failings and help him to guard against them; know all sins and faults, so that they may be canceled from our lives forever, prohibited in the future from resurrecting themselves and coming between us. You agreed to all this. We told each other everything. There—there is nothing you have—kept from me, Jack?"

Stackpool's quick resentment vanished as he looked into his wife's eyes.

"Nothing, dear," he said gently. "We started with brand-new, clean slates. It was easy for you—your slate has always been clean."

"And easy for you," she added quickly. "You know there is nothing I couldn't forgive you—except not loving me."

His hand went out and found hers, and she placed her other over it.

"And so you'll tell me next time when you meet Count De Croix?" she said. "You know it—it hurts not to be trusted."

Stackpool slowly withdrew his hand. "Edith, you make me say what I didn't wish to. I admit I was guilty of a breach of trust—but am I the first to break it?"

"What do you mean? You cannot mean that I have not trusted you?"

"Just that," said he doggedly. "I used to tell you when I met De Croix, but stopped when I learned you suspected my reason for seeing him."

"Suspected? And what do I suspect?" Her breath had quickened.

"That I have broken my promise to you, Edith. You think I have begun to gamble again. This is what comes of telling the past. Instead of cementing your trust, it has shaken it. I have seen it coming between us. You said to-night that marriage does not mean reincarnation. That is the whole crux of the matter. I am reincarnated, but you don't believe it. If I hadn't been I never would have asked you to be

my wife. It is you who have not trusted me."

She sat very still with folded hands. "You are quite wrong, quite wrong," she began, when he interrupted by leaning forward and demanding:

"Edith, is what I have said the truth or not?"

"It is not," she said.

For a long moment their eyes clinched, and then Stackpool leaned back with the expression of a man who has met the first lie.

"You don't believe me?" she asked coldly, though her hands beneath the cloth were pleading.

"No! No! Don't say that, Edith. Perhaps you merely don't understand your own feelings—or no doubt I am wrong."

"You might as well say you don't believe me, Jack. And yet you talk of trust!"

Stackpool sought refuge behind the paper.

"I think," she continued, her eyes starry with resentment, "that if you talked less about trust and did a little more plain, everyday loving it would answer everything. But so long as you have Count De Croix you want nothing more. If—if you cared at all for me you would give him up. You know I wish it, though I have never said so." "Might as well," he shot through the paper.

"An inveterate gambler with a newspaper reputation," she concluded, "one who has gamed all his life, is no companion for a self-respecting man."

Stackpool nodded with the masculine satisfaction of the sex when they hear the confirmation of a statement femininely refuted.

"I have told you, Edith, that I will not give up De Croix. It's friendship, nothing else, though you don't believe so, say what you will. De Croix is a gentleman, if he *has* one vice, and he did a lot for me once when I needed it badly. Would it be reasonable of me to ask you to renounce one of your old friends?"

"I have none of the same caliber as Count De Croix."

"There, I told you so." He shrugged. "You don't believe me when I say he has no evil influence over me; that I have not gambled with him, or with any one, since I gave you my word. Hang it all, Edith, a man doesn't want to be coddled like a child. I'm sensible of the love behind your attitude, but I can think for myself. If I could entertain De Croix in my house, as I

of all this wrangling? You've no reason for disliking De Croix. Can't your New England conscience forgive his vice? You've never even met the man."

"Nor will I. I gave up, and gladly, many things when I married you, Jack; now I ask you to give up this man. It would be a very little thing to do for my sake."

"It would not be a very little thing,



"You know there is nothing I couldn't forgive you."

should, there would be an end of all this."

"Indeed, there would," she cried, "for if that man ever enters this house, I'll leave. There, you've made me say it at last, Jack. I'm sick of hearing his name, and I hate him. You can choose between your wife and your so-called friend."

Stackpool made an effort at composure.

"Oh, be fair, Edith. What's the use

but the greatest of all—treason to a friend. I won't do it. That's final. I will still respect your wishes in that I will not invite him to this house while you are here. I will tell you whenever I meet him—if you wish. But it will only make you unhappy, for I know what you think."

"And if I told you that it was *not* my so-called New England conscience?"

"Then I'd tell you that you haven't analyzed your own heart."



"At last! At last!" cried De Croix triumphantly.

To this she made no reply, and Stackpool arose and irritably hunted up a pipe. Ordinarily Edith would have preempted the right of filling it, but now she did not offer, and by this Stackpool felt—to use an abominable triteism—that relations were strained. It was their first serious difference, and he felt as if suffering from neuralgia of the heart.

II.

Stackpool was speaking.

"Gentlemen, I have assembled you

here to-night for the purpose of discussing a matter that has been troubling us all for some time past. I think we should face it openly and together, for none of us has a prior right over his neighbor. The matter in question is De Croix. We can no longer be blind to his necessity, and we must consult on the best means of relieving it. We are all that's left of the old bohemian guard, and I know every one is only too anxious to do his part."

"Right," said Tobey. "It's time we got together on this deal, but I confess

I hadn't the nerve to come to the scratch. Lord, I've lain awake nights thinking how best to give De Croix a lift without offending him. He's so infernally proud. You can't lend him money—he's a queer disciple that way. And, Judas Priest, I've even turned preacher—me!—and tried to pry him off the cards. But what's the use?"

"It's no use, you duffer," said Morgan, "and you should know it. Show me a man without a failing and I'll show you either an idiot—and lunacy is a *distinct* failing—or a liar and a hypocrite. It's in De Croix's blood. Didn't his pater break the bank at Monte Carlo, and, when he lost it all, blow out his brains? Wasn't there a time when we all were bitter with the vice, and wasn't it De Croix himself who pried loose the teeth by showing us what hydrophobia meant? He knows his disease better than any one, and he has said he'll die of rabies. Because he's a gentleman he won't infect others."

"Yes," put in Stackpool, "we know that once De Croix chose between the cards and a girl. That cost him something, you bet. But he wouldn't ruin another's life, for he knew he couldn't give up gambling. So talking is no use. We have only the right to discuss him now that we may better find the means of helping him financially."

"It's rotten to see him so down and out," said Tobey. "Hang it all, a fellow feels so fat and—and beastly when you see him so thin and skimpy; see the want staring out from every poor but clean stitch he owns! Oh, the pride of him! You hate it, and yet you can't help but honor him for it. He won't eat with you. He has got nothing left but his honor, and—Lord—that's enough! He'd go to hell for it, and he'd starve by inches like a gentleman rather than lower or dirty his name."

"Do use milder language, Tobey, my dear boy," suggested Grimble, an influential church member. "About De Croix—if we help him financially, no doubt he'll only gamble it, but our place is to help him first of all, so let's engineer some plan of circumventing his

pride. You, Jack, I'll bet you have an idea in that old powder-can head of yours."

"Right," said Stackpool. "Here it is, and the only way I can see—lose to him over the cards, gentlemen."

"Eh?" exclaimed the rest.

"Just that, gentlemen. We used to play a pretty fair hand, and I think we can throw a game without him suspecting. It's the only way he'd ever take a cent of our money. There's no chance of having a fictitious avuncular relative die and leave him anything, for he has no relations. Now, he's my oldest friend, and therefore I have the right to ask him here to my house for a game. The club isn't the place, and you gentlemen cannot ask him to your homes."

"U-m-m!" said Grimble. "But, my dear boy, I have no wish to be personal—er—but your wife, you know. Your—er—promised not to gamble—and we all made it."

"It won't be gambling," said Stackpool doggedly. "How can it be? When it is over I will tell my wife, and you gentlemen can confess to yours. As for his being my guest—well, we are all in the same boat regarding our wives not desiring De Croix as a guest, and, thank Heaven, he doesn't suspect. He never asks questions. But my promise to my wife was that I would never ask him up while she was here. Now, she is not here, nor do I expect her for a few days. During that time we should have De Croix on his feet again."

"That's the beauty of being a lawyer," said Tobey enviously. "Why didn't we all think of that technicality when promising our better halves? I'll pigeonhole it for future reference. I think you've hit on a bully idea, Jack."

"Greater love hath no man than this; that he lay down his life for his friends," quoted Grimble. "And, my dear boy, that's just what I would be doing—ahem!—if I was going, as you are, Jack, against the wishes of—ahem!—Mrs. Grimble."

"Scat!" said Tobey. "You'll be doing a big enough stunt inventing excuses for being out late."

"No," said Grimble, with a sigh of satisfaction, "this is vestry-meeting week."

III.

"At last! At last!" cried De Croix triumphantly. "My luck has changed. I shall retrieve everything yet." He threw down his cards and rose trembling. "Not another hand, gentlemen. Not another hand. It would not be fair—you cannot hope to win. I tell you, my luck has changed. I knew it would come back if only I had patience. For one long, terrible year the goddess has been against me, but now"—he threw out his hands with a simple, eloquent gesture, his thin face ablaze with excitement—"it has all come back—all!"

"Just another hand, old man," said Grimble. "Come on. Give *our* luck a chance to turn."

"One good turn deserves another," said Morgan.

"Sure!" added Tobey. "You cannot quit now, you know. Give us a chance for revenge."

"Just to see if your goddess has turned her face for keeps," put in Stackpool.

"It is you, gentlemen, who have the right to cry enough," said De Croix, the hectic flush still in his cheeks. "But, I tell you, you cannot win. The old De Croix luck has come back."

"Well, we'll try to give it the boot," said Tobey cheerfully. "Cut, Jack."

Stackpool was too engrossed to hear the bell; he was elevated out of himself by the great success of the conspiracy. De Croix already had won enough to put want out of the running.

So when the library door opened, admitting Edith, portmanteau in hand, every man but De Croix drew a great breath and became as quiet as death.

As she took in the scene, Edith's face whitened, and her eyes grew dark until they looked like still pools of water reflecting a storm-swept evening sky. The men had risen, and Tobey, Grimble, and Morgan offered "Good evening," their voices sticky with distress. Only the count was at ease, and he stood

very erect in his well-brushed, shabby evening clothes and spotless, frayed linen.

"Edith," said Stackpool at last, "permit me to introduce a very old friend—Count De Croix. De Croix, my wife."

"I am honored, madam," said the count simply.

She returned the bow in silence, biting her lips.

Then after an imperceptible pause, she came forward with outstretched hand and gracious eyes.

"An old friend of my husband's, Count De Croix, is an old friend of mine. Gentlemen, won't you finish the game? I see it is *écarté*."

She rang for the maid to take away her things, and then accepted a chair by that of her husband. The gentlemen, after a protest, sweepingly overruled, reseated themselves; the four conspirators too much bewildered at the turn affairs had taken to think of inevitable consequences.

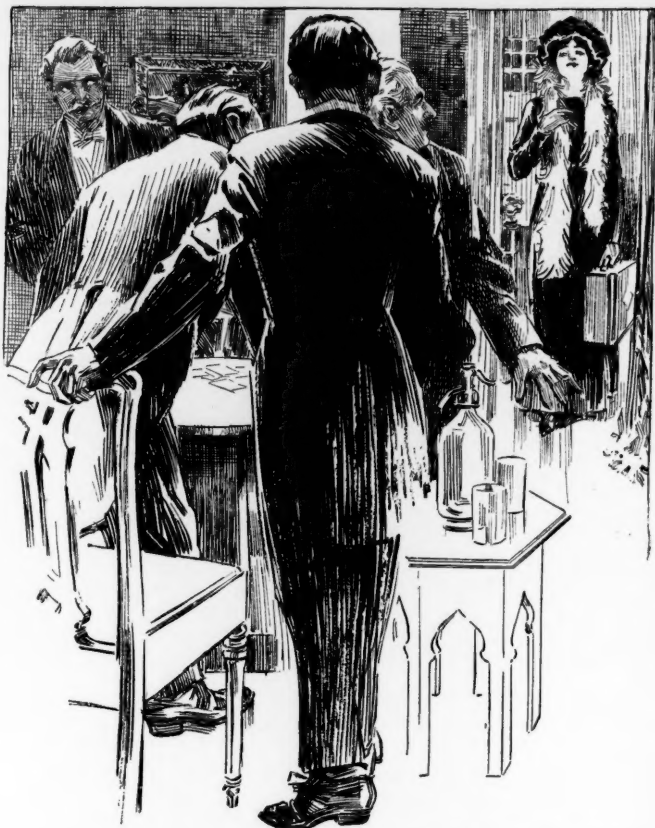
Edith, with growing interest, closely followed the play, a perplexed look slowly dawning in her eyes. Then the inevitable happened by her suddenly exclaiming:

"Why on earth, Jack, are you hiding your trumps? Is this a losing game?"

The conspirators straightened up, Tobey and Grimble making frantic efforts to catch Edith's eye without betraying themselves to De Croix. Stackpool cleared his throat, and began to hum with well-simulated unconsciousness as he strove unsuccessfully to nudge his wife to silence.

But already she had risen, and was sauntering around the table. Her eyes now were on Tobey's cards, and that gentleman grew very red in the face; then sighed his relief as he felt her passing on to Grimble. But her interest was still fixed on Tobey's hand, and as he flagrantly lost the trick she gave a helpless little laugh.

"Well, I suppose I don't know very much about cards, but it seems to me that you gentlemen play a very funny game. Why, Mr. Tobey, you have the best card in your hand. Look, there it is."



As she took in the scene, Edith's face whitened.

"Sure enough," said Tobey, greatly astonished.

"Oh, even the best players sometimes make mistakes," added Stackpool, desperately striving to carry off the matter.

But it was too late. De Croix had arisen, his face tense and quivering. Deliberately he laid the quartette's checks upon the table.

"I think I understand," he said quietly. "Believe me, I appreciate the intention. Good night, Mrs. Stackpool. I am deeply indebted to you. Good night, gentlemen."

Alone with his wife, Stackpool lost all self-control.

"You pretend to save a situation in order that you may better ruin a man whom without just cause you hate. It was not accident, but design. I see it all now. You learned of this plan of ours—now you wish to plead ignorance of the entire affair. At least, you might have the courage of the guilty. I never thought your sex could stoop so low."

She put her hands to her head, staring wide-eyed.

"I do not understand. What right

have you to talk this way to me? I—I thought I had acted fairly well in an unpleasant situation, and—and this is all you have to say. You know how I detest gambling. You have broken all trust, and now you accuse me of treachery and deceit. Because your friend suddenly and unaccountably leaves, I am to blame."

The imperative summons of the telephone called Stackpool to the hall.

He returned stony-eyed, an overcoat over his arm.

"Jack—what is it?"

His reply came chokingly as he flung himself into a chair, lips quivering:

"It—it was Tobey on the wire. He says—says that on the way home De Croix attempted suicide."

"Is—he dead?" Her voice sounded as if coming from a great distance.

"No. Badly hurt. Taken to the Presbyterian. His honor had been fouled. It—it is all my fault. I should have told you. It was a put-up job to-night. De Croix was penniless. We lost to him purposely."

She stood over him, looking down in silence upon his bowed head. Then she knelt, taking his hands between her own and laying her cheek against them.

"Jack," she whispered, shivering, "say that you don't believe that I knew."

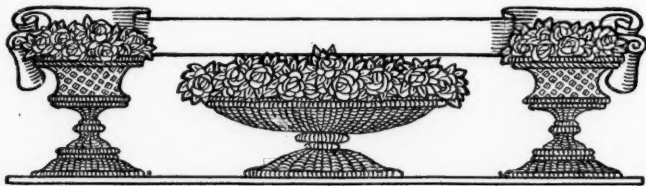
His hand tightened upon hers.

"It wasn't that I didn't trust you," she added, almost inaudibly. "I never believed you had broken your promise—until to-night. It was not Count De Croix's influence over you or your giving way to temptation that I feared. I never doubted you, Jack. But it was jealousy—horrible, primitive jealousy. You wouldn't understand, and I

couldn't confess. I was too ashamed. You seemed to care more for him than for me—I was an outsider. I thought he was taking you from me. Oh, I know you never neglected me in any way, but I selfishly wanted you all, and I grudged him his little share. Oh, won't you understand that it isn't the other woman whom we wives greatly fear? It is the friendship of man for man. Our ignorance makes us afraid. My narrow little heart had only room for one—for you, dear—and I judged your heart by my own. I fought so hard against it—oh, so hard—and to-night I thought I had won. At mother's bed I learned that there are different degrees of love; that only by loving all can we truly love one. But then when I found you, as I thought, gambling, when I was away watching my mother's fight for life; when it seemed as if you had never missed me, then all my old resentment and jealousy awoke, and—and it cost something to act the part I did. But I was innocent of all treachery, all deceit, Jack. I thought you were playing in good faith. If you had only told me your plan, confided in me, I would have been so glad and proud to help. Oh, I am so sorry, so sorry! It was never a case of doubt, a matter of trust, but of mean, despicable jealousy."

"No, no!" said Stackpool, looking down into her eyes. "It *was* a matter of trust, Edith—and I was lacking. I see it all now. Dear, if you can only forgive me, forget all question of trust, forget everything but that I love you, and—"

"Hush!" she whispered. "No more! That is all I ever want to hear—just that you love me. Come, let us hurry to De Croix."



The Well-Dressed Woman

By Anne Rittenhouse

THE American climate is such that women can arrange their winter clothes during this month. Our autumns are only moderately cold. With so many days of pleasant weather in which one does not need a heavy coat suit or furs, with nights so temperate that a topcoat serves all needs, thick winter costumes are not made until December. We now expect our bitter weather. To meet it we are making coat suits of cheviot, interlined serge, zibelline, and ratine. It is true that the zibelline has somewhat had its day, as it was rather too popular last year to last long, but it is still in the wardrobes of many women.

They are ordering new suits of it because they like it, and because they are the kind that cling to a fabric or cut which has gained their approval. Ratine is the new stuff. It has a heavy body and a coarse, crinkly surface. In a sense it is a kind of astrakhan, although it is not so heavy. If it was it would be unbearable for a coat suit on the majority of our days. Its softness and suppleness are most attractive because they mean light weight.

One could write a whole volume, by the way, on the fight for materials that have no weight. The manufacturers are possessed with the desire to keep everything, no matter what its name, down to the thinnest texture. Even this ratine, which looks as though it would add pounds to a woman's weight, is really like chiffon velvet in the hands. A coat suit of it is as easy to carry as an evening gown of satin.

The mannish Scotch and English suitings are having days of popularity. They came into fashion in August, when the Paris dressmakers were building gowns and suits for their openings. They were not quite popular during the

first six weeks of autumn with us in America, but this was merely a question of climate more than anything else. They are serviceable and attractive in coloring, and the woman who is hunting the shops for a fabric that will make her an excellent coat suit, would do well to choose among these suitings. She should be careful not to get too loose a weave, like the Irish homespun, which is apt to lose its shape when cut along the narrow models of to-day.

While it is quite true that a large majority of women who read this page are averse to the modern narrow skirt, yet they will not go so far from the fashion as to have a full one. They will at least omit pleats and many gores, and they will cut the side seams on the skirt, even if they stretch the hem to two and a half yards, or, maybe, three. The ultrafashionable skirts are only about a yard and half wide. It is not the hobble, for this went out of fashion in August. It is merely a straight up-and-down Empire skirt, that on certain slim figures is quite attractive.

After ratine and these mannish suitings, there is a choice between serge and cheviot. The latter is in good weaves this winter, and its services are well known. It is striped or plain, is warm and stylish. Serges are quite smooth. The manufacturer decided last spring to omit the herringbone, wale, and the coarse twill. There is always something about smooth serge that keeps it from being the best choice for a heavy winter suit, but it serves as few other fabrics do for the mid-seasons. It is at its best from September to Thanksgiving, and from Easter to July.

If a woman likes it, and desires to have a winter suit of it, she can always



Satin evening gown with tunic of chiffon edged with fur; yoke and sleeves of lace.

Pale-blue satin evening gown draped with chiffon of the same shade. The draping is finished in the back with a buckle of black velvet.

Gown of rose satin; tunic of lace and mousseline de soie, edged with a band of satin embroidered in gold.



Gown of cachemire de soie trimmed with black velvet.

Simple and attractive frock of mousseline de soie trimmed with ruffles of the same and velvet of a darker shade.

Gown of black velvet trimmed with soutache; the yoke and cuffs of Irish lace.



Gown of broadcloth trimmed with tucked messaline and embroidery; silk cord with long tassels at the side.

Gown of blue serge. The skirt is high and finished with a narrow band of black satin. The satin bands also trim the waist, and give the effect of a sailor collar and deep cuffs.



Suit of broadcloth trimmed with black satin and small buttons of black satin. It is worn with a Persian vest.

Serge suit trimmed with black silk braid and black velvet. Sailor collar of velvet edged with the braid.

resort to interlining. The manufacturers have invented such soft, thin, woolly things to go between the lining and the fabric that the bugaboo of interlining is done away with. When one had to use such a heavy material that the slim shape to the coat was lost, and the lines were not sharply defined, then one dreaded interlining. Now the fabric inventors have saved the day.

The very best way, however, in which to use this smooth blue serge during the winter is for one-piece frocks. These are very much in fashion, and are worn under a topcoat on cold days and in the house for day hours. They are trimmed with black satin, which was never more popular than now, not only as a trimming, but for one-piece frocks, topcoats, and for every known kind of house or evening gown.

To come back for a moment to the blue serge frocks; if you are making one, remember that it must have wide, lustrous silk braid on it, a sailor collar of black satin and Irish lace, a peasant sleeve, and a high-waisted girdle of the braid.

After this is accomplished, no other detail matters, although I might mention in passing that heavy braid buttons or gun-metal ones are in good style, that military bars of braid and satin are put down the left side of the blouse and skirt, and that the skirt itself is fully three inches from the floor, unless you seriously object.

Every woman may not understand about the new sailor collar, and it is because they are so popular that it is not amiss to go into details. The collars used on the coats nearly touch the waist in some cases, and all of them are more or less deep; but those used on the one-piece serge frocks are only about five inches deep at the back and run to points, if one wishes, in front. Some women prefer the ends cut off straight, and this gives a newer look, as the *Directoire* and *Incroyable* collars are the fashion.

If one wears a chemisette above this high-cut collar, or if one does not, it is wiser to cover the neck line of black satin with something white. Therefore,

a small circular Irish lace collar is used as a finish to the neck line. It is put inside the neck for an inch, and the rest goes on the outside. This redeems that crude look that always comes about when a dead-black collar is worn against the neck.

As another finish to the satin collar there is often a heavy cord of itself. This is arranged into scrolls at the corners or in front. When this is done, a similar cord is used across the top of each sleeve, on a line with the edge of the collar.

I saw a charming little blue serge made up in this fashion for a young girl. She wore a dull red velvet belt with it instead of a braid one, and her hat was one of those new soft affairs like *Pierrot's* cap. It was made of bright red velvet edged with brown skunk fur.

It would not be fair to camel's hair to praise the other fabrics without mentioning it among those that are durable and stylish for one-piece frocks as well as coat suits. It has quite a following this winter, and is used in black, mahogany brown, and marine blue. I saw a smart one-piece frock of it made for a woman who must wear her clothes steadily and get the best service out of them for every hour. She will use it for the house, and also for the street under a fur coat. It was modified from a *Worth* model to suit the American fashions.

The skirt had slight fullness at the belt just where it fell over the back of the hips. There was a six-inch band on the bottom of the skirt, of the new heavy silk braid that one sees in all the shops, which looks like basket weave. A few inches above this was a fold of the cloth. If your figure is too short for this double line, omit the fold.

The peasant blouse had another wide band of the braid from bust to waist, giving it the high line, suggestive of the *Empire*, that one must have on everything this winter. The Magyar sleeve has a narrow band of braid, and a three-quarter tight sleeve of black chiffon cloth edged with white lace, below it. There is a white lace turn-



Five new models from Paris.

over collar which is finished in front with a snappy black taffeta bow, and caught with one of those fashionable bowknots of rhinestones.

The chemisette is only two inches deep, and carries a boned stock. This is of white and black net with lace between. The hat that goes with this suit is a soft one in that same crushed shape that has gained more popularity than all the other kind. It is of royal blue edged with black fox.

These hats are such a great temptation to discuss that I shall have to leave the subject of heavy winter frocks for a space at least, to tell you more about these fascinating bits of headwear. Are you interested in their beginning? You are, if you have any curiosity, but so few women have this quality about the origin of fashion that I am always half afraid to go into it.

Paul Poiret, who is one of the most eccentric and brilliant artists on clothes that Paris has produced for some time, made these medieval hats the fashion. They were worn by Pierrot, who belonged to all ages, and by the ladies who pinned their colors on the sleeves of mailed knights and gave their blessings to Crusaders. They have no well-defined shape. They are not made over a form; they are soft, collapsible, easily crushed. When they are on the head correctly, they stand up, cone-shaped, and come well down over one ear and nearly all of the head. This sounds much more rakish than it looks, for the wide, twisted band of fur that is put at the edge softens and beautifies the effect.

Poiret brought them out in heavy medieval tapestry, thickly sewn with gold threads, sometimes with colored stones. Gold ornaments were sewn at the side, and the lining was of vivid green or scarlet or yellow. The fur was of ermine, silver fox, skunk, or lynx. A woman who wished to wear her cap in an unusually jaunty manner turned a bit of it up at one side to show this lining.

The tapestry was somewhat too ornamental and medieval for popular use, so the cap has been copied in velvet,

in sealskin, in plush, and even in satin. It does not need any hatpins, and it goes unusually well with all kinds of gowns. One of these could easily be made at home, and the wearer must crush it into becoming angles after she has it on her head. Young girls are making these caps of red velvet, and their older sisters are wearing them of bottle green, black, and golden brown. Remember there must always be the band of fur. Without this addition the cap is crude.

A wide number of everyday hats are easily crushed, and all of them are made in the collapsible fashion. The two that are best known are the Mercury cap and the bonnet of the Russian police. Both of these fold entirely flat like a man's soft cap, and can be put in the large pocket of a topcoat. On the Russian bonnet there is no trimming except a two-inch band of dull gold braid across the front, with a short tassel at each end. The Mercury cap has two regulation wings standing straight up the sides.

These are made of long-haired beaver more than velvet, which makes for more service. Neither of them requires hatpins. It looks as though the war by men on the long, dangerous hatpins worn by women has had its result in a pinless hat. Every woman will admit that it is preferable to wear a hat that does not need a pin, for she has no love of these steel spikes that disturb her coiffure and tear her veil. As all hats are worn well down over the brow and cover the back of the head, it is quite easy to wear them without a pin if they are soft and can be crushed.

So far has this fashion gone that among the most popular morning hats for young girls are folded affairs of gray-green felt or beaver, with the lower edge turned up across the front in the way girls adjust their panama hats in the summer. There is not a particle of trimming on these, and how do you think they are held in place? By a long gold safety pin run right through the centre of the hat, catching the pompadour. On a windy day one adds a white net veil with a small lace



1. Waist of king's blue chiffon trimmed with black satin bands. It is worn over a waist of white messaline trimmed with lace.

2. Waist of messaline with embroidered yoke edged with narrow silk braid. The butterfly bows of fine lawn, which are fastened under the braid and can be taken out and laundered, are the feature of the waist.

3. Attractive jumper which can be worn with any skirt and waist. It is trimmed with bands of black velvet and a wide piece of Persian trimming.

4. Black chiffon waist trimmed with pointed gold embroidery. The underwaist is also of black chiffon, with yoke and cuffs of lace.

figure across the two edges, tying it on securely at the back, and thereby easily braving any kind of wind and rain.

Surely we are coming into a most sensible year in headgear, if all these delightful little affairs are to hold their own. There is no weight, no hatpin, no trimming to spoil, and no balloon to present to a gale and nearly jerk the head from its moorings.

So much about hats; now back to the suits. It is still the fashion to wear a most severe and mannish coat suit for morning hours unless one chooses the one-piece frock and the topcoat. It is also the fashion to have a dressy coat suit, a style that was imported from Paris and holds its own. One has need for both kinds; the severe coat and skirt serves from nine in the morning until four in the afternoon, unless one is going to a smart little luncheon, when a one-piece frock or the dressy suit must be substituted. The latter, when it carries an appropriate blouse, is worn for church, for calling, for the *matinée*, for concerts, and all manner of affairs that are held after four o'clock in the afternoon.

It is quite necessary that a woman should go to the expense of having a smart blouse to wear with a dressy suit. If there ever was a season when she could economize by omitting this garment, it is not possible now when the high-waisted skirt makes a lingerie blouse a bad adjunct. The economy in having a blouse of the same color, ornately made, is that it gives the appearance of a one-piece frock when worn with a skirt that comes halfway between the waist and bust. One can remove the coat even at an afternoon tea or wedding or luncheon, and look correctly gowned. This would not be possible if one wore a white blouse or one of pleated silk or satin.

All these new blouses are made of chiffon cloth. Net seems to have had its day. There is a primary lining of thin white china silk, and often one of chiffon in another color, or of Persian gauze. It is still the fashion to superimpose one color over another to give an iridescent effect. A color can be

introduced in the blouse that is not even suggested anywhere else on the gown. A blue chiffon blouse has an apricot-yellow interlining, and it is then trimmed on the outside with a small band of tarnished gold into which the wearer has sewn a design of yellow beads.

A blouse that goes with a black velvet suit is of chiffon over white, and between the two there is a six-inch ribbon of royal blue satin, draped over the shoulders and under the arms, and finished with a wide bow in front.

These two examples of what has been done will give you an idea of what you can do with your own blouses if you decide on a dressy coat suit. Remember this, however; that no matter how elaborate this suit may be, its skirt must clear the ground. There are no more long gowns. Here and there one sees them on older women, but the fashion is for short skirts.

If you prefer to wear one-piece frocks this winter for all occasions except the outdoor morning hour, then you will want a topcoat. The choice of this is not difficult. One would think the world had gone quite mad over topcoats to see what the designers have done in this line. No one except the fashionable woman, who makes a point of going out a good deal in society, would think of choosing half of the coats designed; for even if their colors are subdued and their materials modest, there is something about the cut and the drapery that is decidedly rakish. They would not do for the street, or the *matinée*. But there are many outside of these.

Keep these points well in mind when you are choosing a coat; that it must be broad across the shoulder and quite so under the arms, then exceedingly tight around the hips, and narrow at the hem. This is the silhouette, no matter how you carry it out.

The sailor collar and the Capucine hood are shown on many models, but the former is the wiser choice unless one motors a good deal, in which case the hood is used to go over the hat in bad weather.



Fate versus Cupid

By Edith Summers Updegraff

Author of "The Hard Teacher," "Romance in a Restaurant," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY H. VON S. LUCAS

AT last it was all happily accomplished, and without once attracting domestic observation; the choosing of an appropriate gift, the purchasing of ribbon, tissue paper, and a holly-sprigged box; the smuggling of all these articles into the house; the arranging and wrapping and tying up behind the locked door of his den, while the twins hammered vainly for admission; and finally the escape with the precious parcel on Christmas morning.

And such a Christmas morning! All hard, glistening white below and all clear, radiant blue above; and between the white and the blue, a crisp, cold, stimulating air, that made it the greatest joy in the world just to feel all the nooks and crannies of your chest expand with its pure freshness.

As Don tramped along the patchy sidewalk, here carefully shoveled clean, here ankle-deep in snow, with his parcel under his arm, and the twitter of sparrows and jingle of sleigh bells in his ears, his heart swelled with peace and good will toward all mankind, and more especially womankind, which was represented to him at that moment by Pansy. Matthews, in the direction of whose paternal mansion his gift-bearing steps were now bent.

This Christmas box would make it all right with Pansy, he felt confident. His pocket money for the past two months had not been spent in vain; and he would willingly get along for a while without the new double-barreled shotgun, which he had been in-

tending to buy with it. His gift would bring Pansy's jealous soul to the realization that, in spite of occasional slight deviations, his heart turned to her as the magnet to the pole.

The last slight deviation had been Rita Jenkinson, Pansy's cousin. But it was all off with Rita now. When she found that he had passed her by and given Pansy a Christmas box there would be no need for further coolness on his part. Rita, he felt dead certain, would take the hint.

He was mentally congratulating himself upon this delicate ruse, which was to extricate him from his present amatorial difficulties, when he became aware, with a sudden catch of the breath and upleap of the heart, that he was rapidly gaining upon some one ahead of him. Yes, the gray squirrel turban and stole and the bright scarlet skating sweater were unmistakable. It was Rita!

Should he catch up, or should he not? Like *Lancelot*, in his torn, paper-covered school copy of "The Merchant of Venice," he hesitated for some moments between Conscience and the Fiend. "Budge not," said Conscience; and Pansy's soft, gray-blue eyes and gravely sweet mouth came reproachfully before him. "Budge!" whispered the Fiend, flashing before him a radiant vision of Rita's gypsy beauty. "This is your last chance to walk with her."

And Don budged.

As ill luck, or a sardonically grinning fate, would have it, he caught up



"Gee, what a lot of bundles! Let me take 'em," he said gallantly.

with her just in front of the Presbyterian church, which was slowly and decorously filling for the Christmas service. At the moment that he strode up beside her and lifted his cap, the heart in his bosom suddenly turned a somersault, and then sank down into his shoes like a stone into a millpond. Out of the tail of his eye he had caught sight of a gray-blue hat and coat and two long, heavy, pale-gold braids of hair, which were all too familiar. The hat and coat were those worn by Pansy "for best"; the pale-gold braids of hair were undoubtedly hers, for no other blonde girl in the whole town could even come near them; and Pansy, none knew better than Don, went to the Presbyterian.

ly-sprigged parcels which Mistress Rita had been carrying.

She delivered them over to him as a matter of course, smiling bewitchingly, meantime, with her pretty, pert mouth and long-lashed dark eyes, those eyes whose liquid coquetry had made him temporarily forget Pansy's soft gray ones. Her cheeks were crimsoned in the keen, clear air; and countless little purple-black curls, escaping from under her gray squirrel turban, made a fascinating frame for her piquant little heart-shaped face.

Don looked and admired, and almost succumbed again—but not quite. The thought of Pansy braced him. His struggle not to succumb was made outwardly manifest by a marked absence

A faint mist, warning of the heavy clouds to come, had already begun to creep over the sunlight of Don's soul, like the shadow of the much-quoted coming events. It was as if that sardonically grinning fate, which already held him in its clutches, were amusing itself by giving him a slight warning—just enough to make him uneasy. With an effort he shook off the foreboding gloom, consoling himself with the reflection that perhaps, after all, she hadn't seen him; and, anyway, the present would make things all right.

"Gee, what a lot of bundles! Let me take 'em," he said, gallantly loading himself down with the numerous red-ribbon-tied and hol-

of his usual sprightliness and gallantry. He went so far, indeed, as to be almost rude. He didn't intend to be rude, but he was not skilled enough in such matters to take a middle course.

To all the gay nothings that she babbled so lightly and easily he answered only by absent monosyllables, until the gay nothings dwindled and finally ceased altogether, and they walked along, side by side, in constrained silence.

When they came to the corner where their ways divided, he restored her packages, and lifted his cap with the curtest "Good morning."

"Good morning, Mr. Martin," she returned.

And Don knew by that tone of ice that his hint had not been wasted.

He turned, when he had gone a few yards, and looked after the gray-squirrel turban and scarlet sweater with irresolution in his eyes.

What had he gone and done? He had queered himself! And did he really want to be queered? Was he absolutely sure that Pansy was, after all, the one woman in the world for him? He wished he knew for certain. He liked Pansy; but, strange to say, that didn't seem to prevent him from liking Rita, too. Men were like that, he said to himself; and it was one of the things they had to struggle against.

Yes, after all, it was best to break with Rita. He saw again the pain and reproach in Pansy's gray-blue eyes, and the proud aloofness with which she had turned away her golden head when she had met him walking home from school with Rita. Since then she had not spoken to him. Women were queer, jealous creatures, and the only thing to do was to humor them.

Besides, now that Rita's face was no longer before his eyes, he felt quite certain again that Pansy was, indeed, his true destiny.

Three doors from Pansy's house a blighting thought struck him. He had forgotten to inclose anything with the present to show where it came from! After all his care to fix it up just right, he had gone and overlooked one of the

most important things. How idiotic of him! It was all the fault of the twins, who had kept banging on the locked door of his den all the time that he was fixing up the parcel. Lucky he had thought of it in time, though; for otherwise matters would have been left just where they were before.

He fished around in all his pockets, and could find nothing better than an old half sheet from an exercise book, worn and yellow at the folds, and with a caricature of Old Wiggs, the drawing master, on one side. He sat down on the snowy curb and scribbled on the other side with the worn stub of a pencil: "Merry Xmas, from Don." And then underneath, in smaller script:

I hope these are the right size. I couldn't be absolutely sure; but I think they'll about fit. Please excuse paper.

P. S.—Will you come skating on the river on Saturday?

The idea of accompanying his immaculate present with this sad-looking note irked Don sore; but there was no way out of it, as far as he could see. Anyway, Pansy wouldn't mind a little thing like that; and it would be easy for him to explain afterward just how it happened.

He folded the unprepossessing missive twice, and slid it carefully under the edge of the paper that was wrapped about the box. Then he boldly ascended the steps of Pansy's house, rang the bell, thrust the package into the hands of the maid who answered the door, saying hastily, "For Miss Pansy," and beat a rapid retreat.

Three doors from his own house he stopped as abruptly as though he had been attached to a rope and had suddenly come to the end of his tether. At the same identical moment that he stopped, his jaw fell, his eyes took on a glazed, unseeing look; and far down in their depths cold horror sat frozen.

Had the ribbon that tied that parcel been blue or red?

With a ghastly grip tightening on the pit of his stomach, it came over him that it had been red. No, blue. No, as sure as guns, when he had slipped that note in under the paper,

he had distinctly seen something red. It *must* have been the ribbon. Or was it a hallucination? Were his entanglements with women beginning to impair his reason?

One thing he knew for certain, and that was that he had tied *his* parcel with gray-blue ribbon, which was Pansy's favorite color; for he had had the deuce of a time getting just the shade he wanted. Now, as he recalled the parcel delivered to the maid at Pansy's door, it had a *red* ribbon on it. Red—blue; red—blue; red—blue. The fateful parcel appeared and disappeared before his mental vision, now red, now blue, with all the tantalizing elusiveness of a date in history at exam time.

Oh, impossible that it could have been red! His imagination was playing him a dirty trick. It was blue, of course, like Pansy's eyes. No; it came

over him with sickening certainty; it was red, red, red—bright red, like the ribbons that had been tied about Rita's packages!

What should he do? Should he rush back and demand the parcel from the maid before Pansy returned from church? He looked at his watch, new that morning, and realized that by this time she would have returned—and probably opened the box!

Should he seek out Rita and inquire into the present whereabouts of his own parcel? Rita, whom he had just treated so rudely, and who had left him with that icy farewell!

No, he hadn't the nerve.

Maybe, after all, that ribbon had been blue, and all would yet be well. One thing certain was that he was now a powerless instrument in the hands of fate. There was nothing to do but grin and bear it, and hope for the best. Oh, if only he hadn't caught up with Rita! Verily his sin had found him out with a vengeance!

Anyway, he consoled himself, he wouldn't have to wait long. If it was the right box—and probably, too, if it was the wrong one—he would get a letter from Pansy in the course of a day or two. And perhaps Rita would discover the mistake—if there had been a mistake—and write to him or call him up on the phone. *Wait* was Don's watchword; and he waited.

Christmas Day was on a Wednesday. On Thursday morning Don was at the front door before the postman could ring the bell. But there was nothing but two letters and a package for big sister Jess. The afternoon was likewise barren. So was Friday morning—and Friday afternoon—and Saturday morning.

On Saturday morning, after the postman had come and gone, Don went up to his den, and looked at himself long and searchingly in the mirror. The marks of hope deferred were undoubtedly there, in the pale cheek and anxious eye; but he was surprised, and, if the truth were known, somewhat disappointed, to find that there were as yet no evidences of his hair's turning white.



He sat down and scribbled with the worn stub of a pencil: "Merry Xmas, from Don."

There was no doubt about it at all, now; there was not even a mouse hole where hope could take refuge. It had been the wrong package, or he should certainly have heard from Pansy before this. And here it was Saturday afternoon, and never a word even in answer to his invitation to come skating! The ominous silence weighed on Don's soul, and made life seem an empty and worthless thing.

Should he go down to the river or should he not? What use? Ten to one she wouldn't be there, and, even if she were, he wouldn't have the nerve to meet her face to face. Rita would probably be there—with some other fellow—and like enough she would cut him, too. Oh, pshaw! No; he wouldn't go.

But just then came Piggy Parker pounding up the attic stairs to Don's den, with his hockey skates over his shoulder and healthy, youthful enterprise in his voice.

"Come on, Don; the ice's *great*, and the whole town's down there. I was afraid you'd be off before I got here. Get a wiggle on, will you?"

Don would not have believed, until Piggy's breezy arrival, how glad he could be to see him. In two minutes he was into his overcoat and muffler, and had found his cap, and fished out his hockey skates from the extreme rear of the closet where the maid had tidied them away.

He felt almost like himself again as he tramped along beside Piggy through the frosty, sunlit air. What was the use of bothering about women, anyway? Henceforth he would be independent of them, like Piggy.

Alas for Don! He forgot that he was two years older than Piggy, and failed to realize that the only difference between their states was that Piggy's time was not yet.

Once on the river his eyes began to dart and search and ferret, and his heart to cut capers in his breast and throat. A hundred times he thought he saw Pansy's blue-gray hat and coat in the distance, and a hundred times it turned out that he was mistaken.



A hundred times he thought he saw Pansy's hat and coat in the distance.

It was not until some time after he had come to the conclusion that she was not on the ice that he became aware, with a sudden rush of blood to the head, and a sudden pain and stricture in the throat, that she—really she—was skating along right in front of him. He noted, with an access of gangrenous jealousy, that she was with Ern Hanford—Ern Hanford, whom she had formerly spurned for him! But another look suddenly turned the gangrenous jealousy into rose-misted rapture; for—miracle of miracles—she was wearing his Christmas present!

There wasn't the slightest doubt

about it. They were the exact shade of those he had sent her, and they had the fur around the tops and everything. They fitted her perfectly, too. He had ascertained the right size by surreptitiously examining one of her everyday ones in the school cloak room. Without doubt her letter had gone astray.

What an ass he had been to imagine that that confounded ribbon had been red! The weight of the whole universe was suddenly lifted from Don's heart. He felt light, free, gay, jocular. Life was a good and pleasant thing, after all. How soon she would get rid of Ern Hanford, once she knew that he was on the ice!

He skated straight across the river, so as to meet them returning on the opposite side of the ellipse. He had his cap off and a gallant smile of greeting all ready. But at the long-expected moment of transit the gallant smile was petrified, and the arm holding the cap in air fell lifeless, as though a bullet had suddenly gone through it.

She had cut him! Cut him stone dead!

He did not again become aware of the world of men until Piggy came skimming over the ice and bumped into him from the rear, with rough but friendly impetus.

"Say, Don, old man, posing in a beauty show or giving an imitation of a plaster cast? Your trilbys'll freeze solid to the ice if you don't move and move quick."

Don deigned no answer to these facetious remarks. Piggy was fancy, hence carefree; and, besides that, he was not capable of appreciating the finer feelings. It occurred to Don, however, as his soul began to struggle and swim in the black whirlpool into which it had been cast, that Piggy might possibly prove of some assistance.

"Pig," he confided, as, side by side, they skated slowly around the ellipse, "I wish you'd do me a good turn. I've got into an awful pickle, and I can't see daylight anywhere."

"All right. Fire ahead. Pour out your troubles," encouraged Piggy.

And thereupon Don, with some hesi-

tation and much care and circumspection, told Piggy all of his tale of woe that he considered it necessary for Piggy to know.

"Now, what I want you to do," he concluded, "is to go and ask Pansy for a skate; and then notice her gloves—just casually, you know; say they're a good fit, or something like that; and see if you can't find out something."

"All right," groaned Piggy, heaving a huge sigh. "I ain't much with girls, as you know, and I don't pretend to be no diplomatist; but I'll do the best I can for a pal. So-long."

Don watched him skim away; then turned and skated on, sad and solitary in the gay throng.

Halfway around the ellipse he met Rita, skating with Jack Mayhew. She was laughing and talking and darting arrows from her dark eyes in her gayest and most fascinating manner. But as soon as those liquid eyes fell upon Don they froze solid. The pretty, pert little mouth lost its alluring curve, and pursed itself into a thin, disdainful, scarlet line. She passed him with head proudly erect and unseeing eyes, staring straight before her.

Don didn't care very much; he was already too crushed. The human spirit, like the body, can bear just so much anguish; and then a merciful torpor benumbs it. It was only what he had expected, anyway.

After what seemed like weeks of solitary waiting, he caught sight of Piggy serpentine his way toward him through the gay-sweated crowd of skaters.

"I say, old man," Piggy began, when he was about twenty yards away, "those Christmas presents got mixed all right, all right. She says her grandmother gave 'em to her. They were left at the old lady's door in a box along with a lot of pink roses. You didn't tell me you sent roses along mit. Kept a lot back, eh? And they were all away at church, and there was no name to show where they came from. And the gloves were too small for the corpulent old lady, so she gave 'em to Pansy. You know, Pansy's gran is Rita's gran, too; so that side of it's explained. The gloves just



The gallant smile was p.trified, and the arm holding the cap in air fell lifeless.

fit Pansy to a T, and she's tickled to death with 'em. She don't seem to be worryin' much because it's all off with you," he added, with the heartlessness of which only his age and sex are capable.

Don groaned.

That was Saturday.

Sunday was dreary past all belief; and in length it rivaled eternity. Don did not go to the Presbyterian in the evening, as was his Sabbath custom, to

sit in the gallery and afterward wait for Pansy on the steps outside.

Instead, he lounged restlessly in the sitting room, and tried to read one of Jules Verne's novels, which Piggy had lent him with the warm recommendation that it was a corker. Under happier circumstances Don would have considered it a corker, too; but now the lure of romance was powerless to entice his soul from contemplation of the baleful tragedy which was real life.

The question that haunted him now—day and night, meal time and interims—and that made life one long nightmare, was this: What was in that other box?

Monday and Tuesday dragged their slow length along, like Mr. Pope's wounded snake; and Wednesday, with sheen of sun and glitter of snow and jingle of festive sleigh bells, ushered in the glad New Year. It was just such a glorious day as Christmas had been; but to Don the brilliant sun and snow were only garish, and the sleigh bells impertinent and wearisome.

While the family were at breakfast the doorbell rang; and Don, obedient to his mother's nod, went. It was the postman, not riotously bulging and overflowing, as he had been on Christmas morning; but decently laden, nevertheless, with New Year remembrances, which consist, for the most part, as is well known, of misfit Christmas presents, which are being passed along to such friends and kin as may have been overlooked, for one reason or another, at the great gift-exchange festival. There was a largish parcel, tied with red ribbon, addressed to Don's mother. He brought it in and deposited it in her lap.

She untied the red ribbon, removed the paper, and read aloud a card, which was lying on the lid of the box: "New Year Greetings, from Maria."

Don pricked up his ears a little. "Maria" was Pansy's maiden aunt, who lived with Pansy's family, an eccentric old lady, who had been on terms of friendship with Don's mother ever since he could remember.

"Dear Maria," said his mother, with a little smile. "I suppose she thought it was her duty to give me something, because I sent her a little remembrance at Christmas. I wish Christmas giving wasn't so much like that."

She lifted the lid of the box, and drew forth a pair of large, coarse, gray, knitted slippers.

"Gracious!" she laughed, glancing at the number on the sole of one of them. "Sixes! And I wear threes!"

"They'll do for you, Don, my boy,"

smiled his father over the top of his newspaper.

"Yes, son," added his mother, "you take them. Your others are almost worn out; and these are nice and warm, anyway."

Don had no particular interest in the slippers; his thoughts were on less mundane and trifling things. But when he went up to his den he took them along, at his mother's request.

"Gee!" he exclaimed to himself, thrusting his overgrown hand into one of them, to test its roominess. "They're big enough for a hippopotamus! And what frights! Look as if they were made by the carload for the inmates of old women's homes."

Something at the extreme toe of the slipper crackled at the touch of his fingers. He drew it out, and found it to be a piece of paper crumpled into a ball.

It was a sheet torn from an exercise book. It was worn and yellow at the places where it had once been folded; and there were round, blistered spots all over it, which, if Don had been more experienced in such matters, he would have known were the places where big, scaldy tears had fallen.

On one side was a caricature of Old Wiggs, the drawing master; and on the other were these words, scrawled with the worn stub of a pencil: "Merry Xmas, from Don." And underneath, in smaller script:

I hope these are the right size. I couldn't be absolutely sure; but I think they'll about fit. Please excuse paper.

P. S.—Will you come skating on the river on Saturday?

For a long time Don sat on the edge of the bed with the paper in his hand, staring straight through it at the long, dreary waste of the interminable, joyless future, with blank, hopeless eyes.

He roused himself at last. Well, anyway, he knew the worst. Anything was better than that hideous uncertainty. He looked again at the soiled and crumpled paper, and then at the monstrous, coarse gray slippers on the floor, slippers that *he*—ghastly irony—was now expected to wear.

"Life," he said to himself bitterly, "is like that!"



Another Chance

By Martin J. Casey

ILLUSTRATED BY ARTHUR CRISP

MICKEY SPLAINE to the bar!" There were a buzz of excitement and a craning of necks in the crowded, stuffy Children's Court as the door leading from the pen swung open and a barefooted urchin, blinking in the bright sunlight that flooded the room, pattered across the floor. The black-robed judge scowled fiercely at the demonstration occasioned by the entrance of the notorious Mickey Splaine, and beat a sharp tattoo on the judicial desk with his gavel until silence was restored.

"Witnesses in the case of the People against Mickey Splaine come forward!" shouted the court clerk.

There were a shuffling and pattering of shod and bare feet as Tough Tony Sagona and his gang crowded through the gate into the inclosure, and stood in a group in front of the judge's bench. The diminutive prisoner, his freckled face impassive during the furore that upset the dignity of the court, turned, and cast a look of withering scorn at the Wops; his small, beady, gray eyes flashed hatred and defiance at Policeman Tom Cummings as the cop brushed the kids aside, and seated himself comfortably in the witness chair.

"Mickey, you are charged with felonious assault upon Antonio Sagona," said the judge sternly, looking up from the affidavit setting forth the prisoner's latest offense. "How do you plead?"

"Not guilty," Mickey snapped.

The judge nodded to Cummings. "Proceed with your evidence, officer."

"I didn't see the assault committed," Cummings began, "and all I know about the case is that there was a stone fight between Splaine's gang and Sagona's gang down in Moriarity's brickyard on the river front. All the kids dispersed before I got there except the complainant, who was lying on the ground with a fractured jaw. He told me Mickey hit him with a brick, and on that statement I later arrested the defendant at his home. Of course, he denied the charge, but I guess I didn't make any mistake taking him in."

Mickey glared at Cummings as the cop left the stand. That last remark was entirely uncalled for, he mused, but it was just like a cop to keep on pounding a kid and rubbing it in, even though he didn't have the goods on him. He turned abruptly and looked straight into Tough Tony's eye as the leader of the Wops, his face swathed in bandages, raised his right hand and swore to "tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help me God."

The Wop's fractured jawbone made it hard for him to talk, and it was with a pitiful effort that he managed to narrate the events that led up to the near tragedy. He and his gang had gone to the brickyard dock to have a swim, when they were surprised and attacked by Mickey's Terrors from the Gulch. True, there had long been bad blood



"De cops is allus houndin' me."

between the rival gangs, and they had often before engaged in stone fights, but this particular attack, incited by Splaine, was wholly without provocation, if Tough Tony was to be believed. Furthermore, he was positive it was Mickey who hurled the brick that broke his jaw.

"I seen 'im t'row it wid me own eyes," Tough Tony concluded.

One after another the Wops took the stand, and perjured themselves remorselessly, corroborating their leader's testimony.

"Do you know what will happen to you if you don't tell the truth?" asked the judge of Spaghetti Paraneli, whose head missed the top of the bench by several inches.

Spaghetti stood on his tiptoes.

"If I don't I'll go straight tuh hell w'en I dies," he answered.

The thought of the dire penalty for fibbing brought to his mind by the judge suddenly prompted him to tell the truth.

"Tony an' de gang says it was Splaine who t'rows de brick," said Spaghetti, "but I doesn't see 'im. Dey tells me tuh say dat it was 'im, 'cause we all wants tuh git hunk on 'im fer wot he does tuh us lots o' times before."

Mickey smiled hopefully, despite the fact that he didn't have a single witness to refute the testimony of the Wops, and with an air of bravado he climbed into the witness chair.

"Cross me heart, hope tuh die if it was me wot hoits Tough Tony, jedge," he began. "W'en I hears 'im yell dat his face is broke, I'm on de groun' mixin' it up wid Giuseppe Mooni, dat bloke over dere." Mickey indicated one of the Wops with a discolored eye. "W'en dey says it was me wot done it," he resumed, "it's a frame-up, jedge, an' I didn't hit Tough Tony no more'n I'd hit a priest. Dis cop wot pinches me is allus houndin' me 'cause I beats 'im in court a lot o' times w'en he takes me in fer nottin. He's dead sore on me, jedge, and never gi'es me a run fer me w'ite alley."

"But do you know who did throw the brick?" his honor interrupted.

Mickey paused. "I didn't see who trun de brick," he answered slowly,

"an' all I knows is wot I hears. But I ain't a-goin' tuh snitch on de bloke wot dey says done it. Let de cops wot's allus pinchin' inn'cent blokes git 'im deirselves."

For a long time the judge remained silent.

"Mickey," he said at length, "I fear you are the worst boy in New York. You've been coming to this court since you were seven years old—that is four years now—and something has got to be done. Your record shows that you have been arrested more times than any other boy in the city. Truancy, shooting craps, playing ball in the street, fighting, throwing stones at policemen, breaking windows, stealing rides on cars—you've been here for almost everything, and yet you've been in the truant school but once and in the protectory twice. Just think what leniency has been shown you."

"But I ain't never been pinched fer boigtry," Mickey retorted. "Dere ain't nobody wot kin say I ever does annyting crooked. De cops is allus houndin' me, an' de teachers git sore on me fer nottin'—dey never gies me a chanct. Everyt'ing wot's done in school is blamed on me, an' w'en a winder is broke or annyting wrong is done, de cops puts it on me."

The judge, seemingly unmindful of Mickey's rejoinder, grew stern.

"There is a slight doubt in my mind that you are guilty of injuring this boy," he said, "and if it were any one but you, I would be inclined to discharge. But your refusal to tell the name of the boy who did throw the brick, if it were not yourself, and your numerous clashes with the law on former occasions, must be considered in passing on this case. Besides, you engaged in a stone fight after you gave a solemn promise only last week that henceforth you would be good and refrain from breaking the law, no matter what temptations beset you. I'm afraid you find it mighty irksome trying to be a good boy. Repeated warnings seem to have absolutely no effect on you. Now, Mickey, I'm going to send you back to the protectory for two

years, and I hope and trust it will change you and make you a better boy. It is for your own good that I am doing this."

Mickey muttered an oath as he heard sentence pronounced. His eyes blazed with wrath and he shook a clenched fist at Tough Tony.

"I'll moider yuh w'en I comes out, yuh Wop!" he fairly shouted.

The pen-room door slammed behind him, and he dropped into a seat convulsed with rage.

Two previous stretches in the protectory served Mickey in good stead when he was deposited there for the third time. Experience taught him to obey religiously the rules of the institution, and thereby earn his good time, which, if no black marks were recorded against him, would reduce his sentence to sixteen months, when he would be released on parole. It was hard going for the little, red-headed leader of the Gulch Terrors walking a chalk line day after day for what seemed an eternity, but by keeping a damper on his pent-up spirits he would gradually come nearer the day when once more he would be free and able to get hunk.

But the sixteen months in the jug failed dismally to bring about the reformation of Mickey. If he had been guilty of hurling the brick that vanquished Tough Tony, he would have taken his medicine without flinching. But his conviction on a charge of which he was innocent rankled in his little heart during the long, weary months in the coop, with its rigid discipline, regular attendance in class, and numerous other discomforts; and, instead of transforming him from the mischievous and troublesome Mickey into a good boy, it only served to embitter him against the world in general, and the police, Tough Tony and his Wops, and the judge who sentenced him in particular.

While the superintendent of the protectory was secretly congratulating himself on Mickey's apparent reformation, the lad, during his enforced banishment, was busy planning various

forms of revenge on Tough Tony and his gang, from fistic attacks to complete annihilation. He concocted fiendish and nefarious plots seeking the destruction of Cummings, and the other hateful cops, and the peevish school teachers who so incessantly complained of him. Everybody, directly or indirectly responsible for that stretch in the jug, would feel his wrath when he came out. It would be worth going to the "ref" to get hunk on one and all.

When the day came which meant freedom for Mickey, his heart was filled with bitterness and gladness. True, he was overjoyed at receiving his liberty, but he could neither forgive

nor forget the injustice of his captivity, and to be free after those trying months of exile could not atone for the wrong an unkind fate had done him. He had outgrown the jacket and pants he wore when he entered the institution, and it was with a feeling of mortification that he had to go forth in the jug uniform which branded him as a protective bird.

Mrs. Splaine, a sad-faced little woman, greeted Mickey in the superintendent's office. She cried softly as she clasped the red-headed urchin to her bosom, and kissed his freckled face. Mickey betrayed evident embarrassment at this demonstration of affection



Principals of schools in and adjacent to the Gulch had gently, but firmly, impressed upon Mrs. Splaine that they would not take Mickey.

in the presence of the super and the office clerks, and tried gently to disentangle himself from his mother's embrace. Hugs and kisses from Mrs. Splaine had been rarities for Mickey; the cat-o'-nine-tails had usually served to express the mother's feelings for the holy terror of the Gulch.

In view of his reputation as the worst kid in the city, the principals of schools in and adjacent to the Gulch had gently, but firmly, impressed upon Mrs. Splaine that they would not take Mickey. He had been expelled from three schools, and the heads of others to whom the mother prayed that the youngster be given just one more chance turned a deaf ear to her entreaties.

But Mrs. Splaine was determined that Mickey should go to school. Patsy, her first-born, was serving a term in Elmira Reformatory for burglary, and his departure from the straight and narrow path she attributed to lack of education alone. Therefore, it was not to be so with Mickey, and, despite his intense hatred for school and his propensity for getting into trouble, together with the unanimous verdict of principals and teachers that the incorrigible youngster was a menace and beyond redemption, the mother tirelessly and ceaselessly visited school after school.

Mr. Greene, principal of the public school on West End Avenue, a mile and a half from the Splaine tenement, listened patiently to the woman's appeal. Mickey, twirling his cap nervously, fervently hoped that the kindly-appearing principal would reject him as had the others, but his hopes fell when Mr. Greene, after some hesitation, announced that Mrs. McLaughlin might possibly take the lad on trial.

When the principal left the office to consult the teacher as to the advisability of giving the holy terror of the Gulch a last chance, Mickey crossed his fingers, spat over his left shoulder, and made a wish. Mrs. Splaine offered up a silent prayer. Fate was still against Mickey—his mother's prayer was answered.

A warm September sun streamed in

through the kitchen windows of the Splaine tenement when Mickey arose, and with a heavy heart prepared for school. He scoured his face and neck, washed his hands to a point above the wrists, and plastered his red hair until it shone.

The whistles of the river craft sounded clear on the morning air, and awoke memories of glorious days gone by. Mickey longed to make straight for the docks, and spend the day swimming instead of going to the detestable school and struggling with writing and arithmetic and other hateful torments seemingly invented for the discomfort of kids. No lad, he mused, ever played in tougher luck than he, to be released from the jug just in time to be thrust back into school at the beginning of the term.

Though sorely tempted to hike down to the river, he concluded it wasn't worth while. He might get pinched for going on the hook—it would just be his luck, he reflected—and that would mean being returned to the reformatory to serve the remaining eight months of the two-year stretch. No, he wouldn't lose his parole time unless it was for getting hunk on Tough Tony and his numerous other arch enemies.

Mrs. McLaughlin smiled, and bade Mickey a cheery good morning when he entered the classroom. Sullenly he flopped into a seat which the teacher indicated, and quizzically eyed his new classmates, well-dressed boys whom the Gulch, if it could but have seen them, would certainly dub as dudes.

As the morning session wore on, with arithmetic and grammar lessons that were as Greek to Mickey, he became as fidgety as a rat in a trap. He shifted uneasily in his seat, his thoughts far removed from the hateful lessons, and impatiently awaited the sound of the dismissal bell.

Outside of the classroom windows, in the branches of a giant oak tree swaying in the morning breeze, a flock of sparrows, twittering and chirping merrily, caught Mickey's eye.

"Gee, I wisht I was a boid," he whispered to the boy sitting next to him.

"Dey ain't got nottin' tuh do de hull day but fly an' have sport. Golly, but I'd like tuh be a boid."

Oliver Nixon looked up from his grammar book as Mickey spoke, and gazed scornfully at the new boy's jug uniform.

"Why, you're a bird, all right," he said sneeringly. "You're a protectory bird, ain't you?"

Mickey's eyes blazed. Instinctively he clenched his fists, and half arose to put force into the blow he was about to land on Oliver's jaw. The teacher's ruler came down on her desk with a sharp crack.

"Oliver, stop talking, and let the new boy alone," she commanded.

Mickey slunk back into his seat, his little frame quivering with rage and mortification.

"Yuh gotta eat dem woids," he whispered under his breath when the teacher's back was turned. "Yuh gotta swaller line, hook, an' sinker."

Then he fell to wondering why the teacher had not admonished him when she caught him right in the act of aiming a punch at Oliver.

When the dismissal bell rang at noon and the class filed out, Oliver edged into the midst of a group of companions in the schoolyard, and sought to elude Mickey. But the Gulcher detected this strategic move, and, forcing his way through the crowd, faced his new enemy before the gate was reached.

"Goin' tuh swaller wot yuh says?" demanded Mickey, squaring off. "I wouldn't take dat gaff from me own brudder, an' soit'nly I ain't goin' tuh take it from a big stiff."

It was apparent, from the distressed look on Oliver's face, that he regretted his taunting remark, and he cast appealing glances at his companions. If it was protection he sought, his mute appeal was unheeded, for the lads instinctively formed a ring around the pair, and gave no indication that they intended to mix up in the impending affray.

"You're bigger'n him, Ollie," one of the boys ventured, "and you ought to

be able to lick him. Go on, don't let him bluff you."

"An' w'en I git t'rough wid 'im, anny o' youse blokes wot wants tuh take it up fer 'im kin be 'bliged," Mickey chirped.

He turned to note the effect of his words when Oliver, quick as a flash, let drive, and landed flush on his jaw, dropping him like a log.

"Good for you, Ollie!" a cry went up. "That's the stuff; hand it to him again."

Mickey scrambled to his feet, a little dazed, unsteady on his legs, but game to the core.

"Youse don't fight square up dis way, eh?" he snarled. "Den sneaky ones goes."

For reply, Oliver, a trifle self-confident now that he had floored Mickey, swung viciously with his right, but the Gulcher deftly ducked, and shot a hard drive into his opponent's stomach. The blow doubled Oliver up like a jack-knife, and, as his head came forward, Mickey ripped in a volley of stiff up-percuss that sent him sprawling. He staggered to his feet and swung wildly, only to go down again under another terrific onslaught as Mickey bored in and walloped him at will.

Although Oliver knew he was hopelessly beaten, the cries of derision from the bigger boys in the crowd that surrounded the gladiators goaded him on, and he arose again and again, to be battered down by the little protectory bird. With desperation born of madness, he rushed Mickey, who nimbly danced aside, and planted a straight-from-the-shoulder drive on Oliver's nose that sent him reeling to the stone flagging.

"Nuff!" cried Oliver, as the crimson gore trickled down his white shirt front.

"Now eat wot yuh says tuh me," demanded Mickey.

The vanquished Ollie, using his coat sleeve to wipe the blood that spurted from his nose, half arose.

"I eat," he muttered in a voice scarcely audible. "I eat."

There was a sudden rustle of skirts,



"He done it!" sobbed Ollie.

the boys fell back, and the teacher appeared.

"Gracious!" she exclaimed in horror. "What does this mean?"

"He done it," sobbed Ollie, tears coursing down his cheeks. "He picks a fight with me for nothing at all."

"But surely you must have done something to him, Oliver," the teacher said, with just a trace of sympathy in her voice. "Why should he pick a quarrel with you?" She turned to Mickey. "What did he do to you, sonny?"

"He called me a protectory boid, dat's wot he done," Mickey replied defiantly.

"I'm sorry for this, Oliver," the teacher went on, after a pause, "but you did wrong when you called him a name. Come along, and I'll wash the blood off your face before you go home."

Mickey's brain was in a whirl. The teacher had nailed him dead to rights a second time, and she didn't even call him down. What did it mean? All during lunch hour he pondered over the morning's events, but he couldn't understand the teacher's attitude toward him.

It was Mickey's second day in school. The jingle of bells without came to his ear, and his brow clouded. Thoughts

of Tough Tony, who had wisely kept under cover since Mickey came out of the protectory, flashed through his mind. What if it were the Wop's father, who was a ragman? Fortunately, the teacher had been summoned to the principal's office, and the coast was clear.

Mickey arose from his seat and walked over to the open window. Sure enough, it was a Dago ragman. Mickey chuckled. Three of the teacher's flowerpots resting on the sill made splendid ammunition, and bang, bang, bang, he hurled them at the Italian. The ragman, startled by the crash of the first pot, that shattered into a thousand fragments at his feet, dodged in time to escape being struck by the other two. He looked up and beheld a red-headed urchin wiggling four fingers and a thumb from the tip of his pug nose.

The Italian shook a fist at the lad, but, seemingly thanking his lucky star that he had escaped unhurt, passed on.

When the teacher returned to the classroom, she uttered a little cry of horror upon discovering that her geraniums, which she had tenderly nursed for ever so long, were missing. She looked into the street below, and saw the fragments of the pots strewn on the sidewalk and in the gutter.

"I want the boy who threw those pots out of the window to stand up," she said angrily. Nobody arose. "Very well, then," she went on, after a painful pause, "I'm going to ask every boy individually, and woe to the boy who lies. First row stand up."

"No, ma'am, it wasn't me," said Willie Murdoch; "it was Splaine."

"I didn't ask you *who* did it," the teacher said sharply. "I merely asked if *you* did it."

She looked over toward Mickey. "Did you throw those pots?" she asked sadly.

"Yes'm," he replied.

"Boys, be seated," the teacher commanded. "We'll now have a geography lesson."

A lump rose in Mickey's throat; a strange feeling he had never before ex-

perienced in school crept over him. Why was she so easy with him? What did it all mean?

He lagged behind when the dismissal bell rang at three o'clock, and timidly walked up the aisle to the teacher's desk.

"I'm sorry fer wot I done, teacher," he stammered. The lump in his throat made it hard for him to speak.

"I know you won't do it again, Mickey," the teacher said. Her voice was soft and low, and she smiled sweetly. "And you will try hard to be a good boy, won't you? For me?"

"Yes'm," he answered in a voice perceptibly shaky.

Then he hurried out of the room as fast as his little legs could carry him—he didn't want the teacher to see the tears that filled his eyes.

When, a week later, the teacher announced that Frankie Henderson had been deposed as monitor for playing hooky, and she had appointed Mickey Splaine to the coveted place, consternation reigned among the scholars. As for Mickey, his heart bounded with delight when he heard the unexpected announcement, for never before had such an honor been bestowed upon him.

The first day in his new place the teacher was called to the front office. A moment or two after she had gone a fusillade of spitballs shot from all parts of the room, and scattered on the blackboards and the windows. Mickey bounded out of his seat.

"Nix on dat!" he snapped, as he faced the class. "Anny guy wot I sees t'row a spitball ag'in, gotta mix it up wid me after school. Youse gotta can de noise an' hell raisin' wile teacher's out o' de room, an' dat goes. I ain't a-goin' tuh snitch on anny bloke—I'm goin' to hand it tuh 'im meself."

There was a momentary silence.

"Listen to teacher's pet, the protectory bird."

The kids laughed uproariously at the taunt, which came from a far corner of the room.

"Wid one hand I kin lick de guy wot makes dat crack," Mickey hissed, his



"You've been a bad boy, but it's not altogether your fault."

eyes flashing and his jaw set tight. "I dast 'im tuh stand up."

The lads cast furtive glances in the direction whence came the slurring remark.

"He's a rat, an' so's every one in his fam'ly, dead or alive," Mickey went on; "he's a mutt, an' a woim, an'——"

A ripple of excitement swept through the classroom when Roger Monroe, a head taller than Mickey, arose.

"I ain't taking orders from a protectory bird," he said, with a perceptibly strenuous effort to be brave. "An' just because you are teacher's pet you ain't going to put it all over me like you put it over the others."

He dropped into his seat, astounded at his own temerity in hurling defiance at Mickey.

"Got it all off'n yer chest?" the mon-

itor sneered as he walked rapidly down the aisle. "Now, git up, an' I'll hand it tuh yuh right w'ere yuh stand."

Roger was out of his seat in a jiffy ready for the attack, but when Mickey feinted for the stomach he dropped his guard. Like a shot out of a cannon Mickey swung to his jaw, sending him sprawling over the desk, dazed by the force and suddenness of the blow, and too helpless to rise.

When Mickey turned around, the teacher was standing in the doorway.

"Mickey, will you kindly distribute the drawing pencils and paper? Also get the models out—you'll find them in the far closet."

The teacher's voice betrayed no trace of anger. The boys, waiting expectantly to hear what she would have to say, now that she again had nailed Splaine

with the goods, were mystified at her utter disregard of the attack she had just witnessed.

Roger, sulking and rubbing his jaw, was completely at a loss to understand her manifest discrimination and deliberate slight of what would have been an almost unpardonable offense if committed by any boy other than the protective bird. Mickey's whirling brain could not solve the perplexing problem; he could only wonder what a strange enigma the teacher was.

Mickey didn't stir out of his seat when the dismissal bell sounded at the noon hour. He unwrapped a newspaper containing his lunch, a corned-beef sandwich and a bun, and spread it out before him. For a long time he was silent; his lunch remained untouched. The teacher's voice aroused him from his reverie.

"See what I have brought you, Mickey, a nice piece of chocolate cake," she said. "And I made it myself, too. But you must eat your sandwich first."

Two tears glistened in Mickey's eyes and trickled down his face.

"Teacher, yuh seen wot I done tuh Roger?" he asked.

His little frame was shaking, his heart thumped violently against his breast, and again that lump was in his throat. He tried to go on, but his voice failed him.

"It was very wrong of you to strike Roger, but he must have done or said

something that aggravated you," she replied. "By and by the boys will cease annoying you, but you must be patient and try not to fight. Don't you know that it hurts me dreadfully and makes me wretched when you do wrong? Perhaps you didn't know it, but I have felt so sorry and disappointed when you've been bad that I have cried."

Mickey sniffed suspiciously. "Teacher, I ain't never got a deal like yuh gi'es me," he stammered. "Yuh gits me wid de goods, an' yuh never t'rows de hooks into me. Gee, but I wants tuh be good—I jes' wants tuh be good fer you. I—"

He buried his face in his hands. The teacher cuddled in the low seat beside him, and entwined her arms around his neck. She ran her fingers through his tousled red hair, and drawing him tight to her bosom, bent over him until her lips touched his ear.

"Don't cry, sonny," she whispered. "You've been a bad boy, but it's not altogether your fault. They never gave you the right kind of a chance—that's been the whole trouble. I've experimented with a brand-new antidote, and I think I've won, haven't I?"

Mickey went to pieces. He burst into a paroxysm of tears, his little frame was convulsed with sobs. Suddenly he raised his tear-stained face, and looked straight into her eyes.

"Oh, teacher, w'y doncha gim'me hell?" he wailed.





Miss Anthony

By

Kathryn Jarboe

Author of "The Owner," "A Love Test," etc.

A TWO-PART STORY

ILLUSTRATED BY SIGURD SCHOU

CHAPTER I.

CATHERINE ANTHONY sat in the big reception room of the Santa Margarita Hospital waiting for her carriage. She had made her first effort since her brother's death to reunite herself with the world. It had seemed to her that it would be more easy to do this in her official capacity as one of the managers of the hospital than in anything that would savor more of social intercourse with her fellow creatures. But the sympathetic words and glances of the members of the board, their discreet waiving of all subjects that might recall her recent bereavement had proved too much for her strength, and she had abruptly withdrawn from the meeting and telephoned for her carriage.

Now she sat with her long veil partly thrown back from her face, and realized, with a little grimace, that her sister-in-law had been right when she had said that the hospital would be the very worst place to which she could go.

With an impatient sigh she rose and walked across to the front window to

see if the carriage might be in sight, but the long avenue stretched empty away from the high brick wall that inclosed the hospital grounds. This wall, laid in beautiful tapestry bricks, had been Jimmy's idea, and Jimmy's money had bought the land that surrounded the hospital. For, frivolous and light-hearted as Jimmy had always been, he had idolized his sister, and he had said that if she wanted to play with the hospital he would make her toy as beautiful as money could make it. The quick tears rushed to her eyes.

"Oh, Jimmy, Jimmy boy!" she murmured, and shrouded her reddened eyes and quivering lips with the heavy folds of her veil.

Up and down the long room she paced, until, with a sense of suffocation, she again flung the veil back and opened wide the casement window that overhung the court and porte-cochère at the back of the building.

At that moment an ambulance stopped at the gate, and Miss Anthony caught a glimpse of the woman who was carried through the wide-open door. The sight would have left no impression whatsoever save for the sudden

sense of personal shock that passed through her, and she realized that this was the result of the glance that the woman had given her, half frightened, wholly questioning.

With a renewed impatience, Miss Anthony sat down again, and her idle fingers registered her woe upon the long, bare table. But in a moment her sorrowful thoughts were interrupted by the appearance of the matron of the woman's ward. White gowned and white capped, this woman hesitated for a second before the slender, black-clad figure.

"Oh, Miss Anthony," she said, "I tried so hard to see you when you came, to tell you——"

"Oh, I know, Mrs. Barrows, what every one wants to tell me, what every one wants to say; but what good does any of it do?" For an instant the heavy, dark eyes, under their blue-veined lids, were raised to those of the nurse, and, for the first time in their knowledge of each other, the elder woman heard a note of impatience in the girl's voice. "He is gone, gone absolutely out of my life, and there is nothing left; nothing, absolutely nothing!"

"I know. I know just how it is," the woman answered, and added quickly: "I came to ask if you would——"

"Oh, some time," the girl said wearily, "perhaps soon I can do something, do whatever you want, but not now, not yet."

"It is only now that this thing can be done," the nurse insisted. "A woman has just been brought in——"

"Yes, I saw her."

Miss Anthony's lack of interest was so apparent in her tone that the nurse hesitated. But the necessity of her case gave her courage.

"And she saw you," she urged. "She saw you, and is begging to speak to you for just a moment. She is in a very bad way, and if you could—if you would——"

"But what can I do for her?" There was the barest emphasis on the pronoun, but Mrs. Barrows ignored it, and

accepted the question as a half-hearted consent.

"Possibly nothing," she answered, "and possibly a little that will help her. As I said, her condition is very bad, and we could not quiet her until I told her that I would ask if you would come. 'You will come?'"

The form of the question, the woman's movement toward the door, forced a faint acquiescence from Miss Anthony's lips. Mrs. Barrows, noticing the fingers that seemed to cling to the table for support, laid her hand on the girl's arm.

"It will not be very hard. It is only for a moment."

Miss Anthony did not offer any answer. In silence they entered the elevator, and in silence traversed the long hall with its grimly numbered doors. One of these Mrs. Barrows opened, and the girl—Miss Anthony could see now that it was only a girl who had made this curious demand upon her—started to rise from the chair in which she was sitting.

"You have come!" she cried, and then the soft red lips were twisted with an uncontrollable agony, the heavy eyes were covered with clenched lids.

From cases of this sort Miss Anthony always shrank with a curious repugnance. She knew that the doors of her hospital were open at all times to women of all classes and conditions. Material aid she was always ready to give, but now she could only force her reluctant voice to say:

"You wanted to speak to me?"

She heard the harsh tone, she regretted the emphasized words, and she moved a little nearer to the girl, who was studying her face with avid, hungry eyes.

"Yes, I wanted to speak to you because I knew when I saw you there by the window that you would do what I wanted you to do. I am not what you think I am. But, if I live—if my baby lives—I do not care what anybody thinks. We will go away from here, and no one, no one will know anything about it."

She was struggling to release from

its resting place on her breast a small, square envelope, and Miss Anthony, whose quick ears had noted the refinement in the soft voice, the education and culture in the crisp, clear words, laid her hand on the girl's shoulder.

"You may be sure that I will help you if I can." Her voice, soft, gentle, and pitiful, made amends for its former cruelty.

"Oh, I knew you would!" the girl exclaimed. In answer to the appeal in her eyes, Mrs. Barrows went softly out of the room and closed the door. "See, here in this place, I am Miss Hilary, and as Miss Hilary I shall go out of it—in any event—but my boy—if he lives must have his own name, and it is here in this envelope with my wedding ring, with every proof that is necessary to give him his own name. I could not bear to have them take it here because in a place like this nothing is sacred. I did not know that my time was so short, and I came to the city, hoping that I could find—" A low moan of agony stopped the hurrying words. "You will promise?" the white lips gasped.

"Yes, I promise." Miss Anthony took the envelope from the shaking fingers. "When you get well I will return it to you, and if—"

"And if I do not live to see my boy," the quivering lips took the slow words from Miss Anthony, "you promise me that you will see that he comes into his own name and rights?"

"Yes, I promise you."

But Miss Anthony's words were interrupted by the cry that rang from her own lips, for the girl's head had fallen forward, and she was slipping from the chair when Mrs. Barrows came running in.

The struggle in which life battles with death on unequal terms had already begun, and Miss Anthony, bearing the square envelope in her hands, went out from the hospital through the beautiful garden her brother had given it, under the high, particolored gate he had had constructed, and, for the first time in many weeks, her thoughts were not held by that brother and his most untimely end.

CHAPTER II.

The sight of the carriage, of the horses with their mourning trappings, the men in mourning livery, recalled her to herself, and as she drew the fur robe about her she looked with a certain hostile resentment at the square, white envelope in her hand, resentment that, for an instant, it could have obtruded itself between her and her grief. But even as her fingers clasped it, they encountered the small golden circlet in one corner, and her thoughts flew back to the pathetic white face, with lips that, left to their own devices, must have curved in a cupid's bow; the small chin that would have been too firm, had it not been cleft by cupid's finger tips; the tawny, cloudy hair, and tawny, golden eyes.

Miss Anthony almost smiled as she realized that now for the first time she was really seeing the girl, and she wondered that these details should have impressed themselves so vividly upon her mind when she could remember nothing no single one of them.

"I should have asked Mrs. Barrows to phone to me at once." She spoke the words almost aloud, as though she were addressing the little envelope. "But I will call her up as soon as I am at home."

Even Filkins, the footman who opened the door of her house, noted a change in Miss Anthony's appearance. She had lost some of the languor that had hung about her for so many weeks. Her step was firmer, her eyes more alert. In the hall she stopped for a moment.

"Is Bryce here?" she asked. "Tell him I wish to speak to him."

The servant, his own manner answering to the change in his mistress' appearance, sped on his errand, and in an instant Bryce, the old butler, who had known Catherine Anthony ever since her babyhood, stood before her.

"It's so dreary, Bryce," she exclaimed piteously. "Can't you, won't you make the place a little more livable?"

"To-night? You mean to-night, Miss Catherine?"

The eagerness in his voice belied the slowness of his words. For he rejoiced as only an old servant can rejoice in the first sign that Catherine had given of any relaxation from the excessive grief that had weighed upon her. But the practical possibilities were burdening his mind.

Catherine, reading his thoughts, might have slipped away from her desire for any change in the funereal aspect of the place.

"I—I thought some fires—Bryce—and—and, perhaps——"

She was only murmuring the words when her own maid came running down the stairs.

Maggie was Bryce's daughter, and was privileged in the Anthony household almost as was Bryce himself. She had evidently overheard the conversation, for she spoke quickly.

"Of course, to-night. I told you this morning that Miss Catherine wouldn't be staying in her own room forever, and that you'd better have fires and flowers in the rooms down here. Mr. Carter was here to-day, Miss Catherine. I saw him coming, so I answered the door myself, and he said to give you these, with his——" She paused and glanced laughingly at her mistress' averted head. "I think he said with his compliments."

As Catherine Anthony took from the maid's hands the opened box of flowers a faint tinge of color swept across her face, but she hid it in the snowy mass of freesias.

"You told him that I could not see any one, Maggie?"

"I told him," the girl answered, "that I—I was quite sure—I mean that I thought you would see him if you were at home."

"Did he see Mrs. Anthony?"

There was no reproof in Catherine Anthony's voice, but she handed the flowers back and started up the stairs with all the old misery settling about her.

"He didn't ask for Mrs. Anthony," Maggie returned, and, stopping only to hand the box of freesias to Bryce, to

tell him what flowers to get, what fires to light, she ran up to lighten and brighten Miss Anthony's own apartment.

On the second landing, Miss Anthony paused again, and, in a voice that faltered ever so little, said: "I will dine downstairs to-night, Bryce, and perhaps Mrs. Anthony will come down, too."

Miss Anthony stopped on her way down to dinner at the door of her sister-in-law's room, the room that had always been Jimmy's. Mabel Anthony had never had one serious thought in life or about it, and, from the few frivolous weeks during which she had been James Anthony's bride, she had passed into a childish petulance of bereavement.

"I wish you wouldn't knock at my door in just that way, Trina," she fretted, as Miss Anthony entered the room. "Surely there is some other way of knocking on a door than with just those two little taps that—that he used to give."

"I'm sorry, dear," Miss Anthony answered, in the soothing tones that had grown customary to her in answering Mabel's querulous complaints. "Won't you change your mind? Won't you come down with me?"

"No. I told Maggie to tell you that I couldn't. I just couldn't bear to sit there at the table with you, and you know I couldn't. If you didn't—why, if you didn't look so terribly like him, it would be different. But it's so—so awful to have anybody look so like him, and yet not be him!"

Mrs. Anthony dabbed her blue eyes with her black-bordered handkerchief, and shifted the pillows under her blonde head.

"I'm so sorry, dear," Miss Anthony murmured again, quite ignoring the fact that she was expressing sorrow that she looked like the brother she so adored.

And as she stood by the tall mantel above which her brother's portrait hung, the likeness between the two faces was startlingly evident. There were the same dark eyes, under heavy, blue-veined lids; the same wide forehead and level,

black brows; the same white skin and firm, red lips. James Anthony's face was weak for a man's, and Catherine's was strong for a woman's.

"Don't stand there, please, Trina!" Mrs. Anthony's petulant voice ran on. "You know I've asked you not to stand there, right near his picture. And do I have to use these awful things?" She stretched out the mourning handkerchief that had been crumpled into a small ball. "I mean even here in my own room. I don't see why I do. I'm sure all this black stuff makes my eyes sore!"

It was all so silly, so childish, in the face of her own despair, and yet it held its own pathos. Miss Anthony turned wearily away.

"Shall I have coffee sent up here?" she asked.

"Oh, if you like," Mrs. Anthony answered listlessly. "Or I'd rather come to your room for it. There isn't so much of—of him in your room."

And with these words ringing in her ears, Miss Anthony went down to the dining room, where she and Jimmy had dined together such countless times, where Jimmy's light-hearted laughter had echoed in and out of the years, where Jimmy's frivolities and absurdities had all been hatched. For even Catherine Anthony knew that Jimmy's twenty-three years had not been, in any way, model years. She knew that time and time again the town had roared with or been shocked at his antics, but she knew, too, that in the conception of most of them she had had her part, for, in their orphaned childhood, when she had outranked Jimmy by only one year, she had disguised her part of mentor in the cloak and mask of comrade.

Over the coffee in the little library that opened from her sleeping room, Catherine concealed her weariness and her own grief while she listened to the complaints that poured in a steady stream from Mabel Anthony's lips. Once, and only once, she remembered the girl who had occupied a part of her afternoon's attention, and then she was obliged sharply to recall her thoughts, for she

found that she was comparing the face of the girl in the hospital with that of her brother's widow, to the infinite disparagement of the latter.

"Dick Carter was here this afternoon." She spoke in abrupt chiding of her own thoughts. "Did you see him?"

"I! Oh, Trina, what a thing to ask! As if I could see any one like that! Anyway, Madame Virot was here all the afternoon trying on my gowns. There must have been a dozen of them. And I was so dreadfully tired! I had to sit down so many times!"

Catherine looked at the fragile, little figure in its clinging, black gown, and a wave of pity swept over her.

"But why did you let her bother you so?" she asked. "You don't need the gowns now, do you?"

"Oh, Trina, don't be so cross to me," Mabel Anthony pouted. "What else can I do to amuse myself but have gowns made? I can't go anywhere or see any one, and—and I thought perhaps I might go away—abroad or something—where nobody'd know me, and where I wouldn't have to wear quite such awful things. But Virot said I'd have to wear them anywhere, because everybody'd know James Anthony's widow. And she wouldn't even make me one short skirt. They're all of them long and draggy like this, and—and he liked me so much in my little short skirts. And, oh, that's the worst of it!" She twisted herself around in the big chair, and buried her head in its soft cushions. "I can't call him anything but just *he—he*. Nobody would call a dead person Jimmy, and I hate James, and ever since that awful day I've just had to say *he!*"

Miss Anthony knelt down by the big chair, and put her arms around the sobbing girl.

"Oh, please, please, dearie, you mustn't be like that. Of course we must call him Jimmy and think of him as Jimmy all the time. See, nobody but Jim ever called me Trina, and yet how silly you'd think me if I said I couldn't stand it to have you say that name. Can't you be a dear, brave little woman, and think of him just as you did when

he was here with you, think what a blessed husband he was, and——"

"Oh, no, no, I can't think of him in that way!" She pushed the caressing hands away. "Whenever I start to think of that, I just make myself say: 'You haven't got any husband, you're a widow, you're a widow, you're a widow.' And that's what I am saying all the time, and everything says it to me. All the clocks say it, and his watch that I keep under his pillow says it, and the carriages that go past at night say it. You don't know what that means. You can't know anything about it. He wasn't much to you, only a brother, and so, perhaps, you can think of him. But I have to think of myself. I'm only a girl, and I'm a widow!"

In her excitement she was sitting up quite straight, and as Catherine Anthony looked up into the round, blue eyes she found herself wondering if any soul lay within them, if Jimmy, her Jimmy, had ever seen soul or heart in the selfish little face. Reproaching herself for the words before they were even formed in her mind, she began to rub gently one of the hot little hands she was holding.

"Poor little girl," she murmured softly, "you are tired. You are worn out. Won't you see Doctor Beverley in the morning? Perhaps it would be better for us to go away. If he says so, we will go over to London, and——"

She was interrupted by the soft burr of the telephone on her desk.

"Yes, it is Miss Anthony," she answered. "Oh, Mrs. Barrows, yes. She died! Oh, poor child! And her baby is alive! Well, that may be good, and it may be bad. Yes, I will come to the hospital in the morning. Do everything in my name, of course. Yes, I meant to call you up. Good-by."

As she hung up the receiver she saw that her sister-in-law, her eyes blazing with wrath, was standing by the door.

"Now, now, see what you have done," she cried, in childish rage. "You went to that awful place when I begged you not to go, and then you asked me to come into your room just to hear an awful thing like that—about somebody

who has died. Can't you see how dreadful it is to me?" And with no pause for answer or explanation she fled from the room.

Miss Anthony stood for a second, looking down into the glowing coals on the grate.

"Oh, Jimmy, Jimmy boy," she whispered. "I wonder if perhaps I'm not glad that you are gone!"

But the ever-present sense of her own desolation swept over her, and she covered her eyes with fingers that could not hold back her tears. For a few moments she stood there, all alone in her woe, and then she sat down at her desk with the envelope that she had brought from the hospital.

CHAPTER III.

Just how long Miss Anthony sat there with the square, white envelope staring up at her she could not have told, but suddenly it seemed to her that it was possessed of a baleful personality. She lifted it and read the name on the outside: Agatha Hilary. Quite deliberately, now, she tried to recall the flowerlike face of the girl who had given it to her, the long, oval lines; the tawny eyes and hair, the dimpled chin, and curving, scarlet lips.

"Agatha Hilary," she murmured. "Well, now to see who and what you were!"

The knife she picked up to open the envelope was a small, heavily jeweled thing that Jimmy had bought for her once when they were together in Cairo, and, with all her force of will, she could not keep his laughing, merry face from obtruding itself between her and the matter she desired to study.

"Oh, Jimmy," she cried, "and she said that you were nothing to me but a brother!"

For another span of moments she gave herself up to her sorrow, but again she nerved herself to the task in hand, and ripped open the envelope. A tiny circlet of gold fell out, and she lifted it with a tender curiosity. The ring was very small, and Miss Anthony remembered the long, slender fingers



"Don't stand there, please, Trina!" Mrs. Anthony's petulant voice ran on.

that had clasped hers in such an agony of petition. Holding the ring under the shaded lamp on the desk, she looked to see if it were marked with any inscription. Cut in the inside were the initials J. B. A. to A. H., June 10, 19—.

"Why, those were Jimmy's initials, too," she murmured, with a faint note of surprise, but she added immediately: "I'm glad she really was married—I was almost afraid——"

Beside the ring there was only one folded piece of paper, and this Miss Anthony opened with the same tender-

ness that had fingered the ring, but with a definite lack of curiosity. Who or what the man might be who had fathered the child and neglected the wife would make no difference to her, because she had already decided to put the matter into the hands of Mr. Harrison, her own personal lawyer.

For a single second she looked at the white page before her, seeing nothing.

Then the paper crumpled in her fingers, she pressed both hands upon her lips. Had she shrieked aloud? Would the whole household be down upon her

and find her with this—this awful thing? For the names James Bishop Anthony and Agatha Hilary had thrust themselves in and out of her brain like live wires burning it, searing it with their anguish.

But only its wonted stillness held the house, and, with a movement that was almost furtive, she carried the paper to the larger, brighter light, and spread it out.

There was no possible doubt about it. The marriage certificate, signed and sealed, bore witness to the fact that on June tenth of the year before, James Bishop Anthony had been married to Agatha Hilary by the Reverend Samuel Grieg, of St. Luke's Church, in Pleasantville, New Jersey.

Only for a second did Miss Anthony let the glaring light fall on the shameful words. For, at first, the one idea that possessed her was that no one, no one in all the world except herself must know it, and only afterward did she realize that not for a second had she doubted its truth, doubted the fact that Jimmy, her adored and idolized brother, had married this girl some seven months before he had gone through the self-same ceremony with Mabel Stuart. Thrusting the ring and paper back into their envelope, she locked it into the inner recess of her safe, and then, and only then, did she let herself face the gruesome thing that had confronted her.

"Jimmy, Jimmy!" she moaned. "Oh, how, how could you, how could you?"

Back and forth she paced through the long rooms, trying to force some coherence into her thoughts, but only in that same wail would they express themselves. Pausing at one end of the dressing room, she found herself staring at her own image in the mirror. Drawn and tense as was every feature it was still Jimmy's face that she saw there, and again she cried out to him, asking again how he could have done the thing.

Suddenly, though, a solitary idea sprang into instant life. Had the girl recognized her as Jimmy's sister? With a passionate gesture, as though she would wipe out the resemblance, she

turned from the mirror, and in her hurried pacing to and fro avoided any chance encounter with it. But fast upon the steps of that first idea came a second. Had the girl said anything to any one at the hospital? Had she spoken rationally or irrationally of Jimmy and her connection with him?

With a curiously shaken voice, Miss Anthony called up the hospital, and asked for Mrs. Barrows.

"Mrs. Barrows is not here to-night," came the answer.

"Not there?" she questioned nervously. "This is Miss Anthony," she added, realizing that the explanation was necessary, so foreign to her own ears was the sound of her voice. "I wanted to ask about Miss Hilary, the girl——"

"Perhaps the nurse who was with her——" suggested the attendant. "Shall I call her?"

"If you please," assented Miss Anthony, and even as she said the words, she was overwhelmed with the horror of any betrayal of her secret that might lie in her curious questioning. "Oh, Miss Drexel," she exclaimed, as a new voice greeted her ears. "I was so occupied when Mrs. Barrows called me up earlier in the evening. You were with Miss Hilary—when she——"

"I was with her all the time, Miss Anthony. She lived for only a few moments, Mrs. Barrows told you? She did not recover consciousness at all after you left."

"Oh!" Fearing that the relief in that single monosyllable was too apparent, Miss Anthony added a perfunctory: "Poor girl!"

"Yes," the nurse answered in coolly professional tones. "It is very sad. The boy is a beautiful baby, and so like the poor little mother."

The relief from this horror came before the horror had been imagined. If the boy had been Jimmy's counterpart!

"I—I didn't know," she stammered.

"No, as a rule babies are not very individual." The nurse agreed with the statement she supposed Miss Anthony was trying to make. "But this one is quite remarkable, all pink and white,

with very red hair, and the same little dimpled chin. It is really wonderful."

"Thank——"

"Thank God," Miss Anthony had started to say, but Miss Drexel heard only the first word; the second was lost in a curious vibration of the wire.

"Oh, not at all," she answered. "Mrs. Barrows told us that she thought the girl had confided in you, and that, doubtless, we would hear from you."

"Thank you just the same," murmured Miss Anthony. "And I—of course—yes—I will come down in the morning."

Hanging up the receiver, she added passionately: "I am glad, glad that she died without revealing anything!" Then her thoughts swinging only as a pendulum swings in its prescribed limits, she cried: "Oh, Jimmy, Jimmy boy, how can I say that I am glad of anything, now, now that you have done this!" And again, to the measured rhythm of her padding footsteps, came the old wail: "How could you, how could you?"

She tried to recall those June days; tried to see if she could remember how she could so have lost her hold on Jimmy that he had done this awful thing. The tenth of June was the day on which the garden and its surrounding wall had been formally presented to the hospital, and Jimmy had refused to be present at the ceremony. He had told her that he had a million engagements for that day. She distinctly recalled his words:

"No, Trina, I've got heaps to do, and I'm not going to make myself look like a solemn idiot and stand up there for all those people to talk at! If it were a ring or a pin I was giving you, I'd like to hand it over and have you kiss me and say 'Thank you kindly,' but you couldn't kiss me and say, 'Thank you kindly' there, and we'd both look like bally fools! So that's the end of it!"

"But you might tell me what your engagements are," she had urged.

"I couldn't even tell you one of them," he had laughed back, and she had thought that he meant that he had not even one. Now she understood what

he really had meant. He was going to marry this girl!

The hours wore themselves out one after another, but Miss Anthony knew nothing of their passing. Once she remembered Mabel Anthony's petulant little outburst: "I'm a widow, I'm a widow, I'm a widow!"

An hysterical sob choked her. Mabel Anthony wasn't a widow, after all. Mabel Anthony! She wasn't Mabel Anthony at all. It was Agatha Anthony, Agatha Anthony, who was down there at the hospital! Now, the situation as it would present itself to Mabel Anthony came into her mind, and before its hideous aspect she cowered down beside the couch and buried her face in its pillows.

At some time while she lay there, too dazed even to ask her mind to think coherently, there sounded on her ears a sentence that she had overheard at a small summer hotel where she and Jimmy had been stopping. "That Jimmy Anthony is absolutely lacking in moral sense!" She had overheard it, and had known that it was spoken by the victim of one of Jimmy's practical jokes. Bubbling over with amusement, she had fled to him with the report, and together they had shrieked their laughter. Now the words were tense with sinister import. Had Jimmy had no moral sense? Hadn't he known right from wrong, honesty from dishonesty, honor from dishonor? Were there people in the world who didn't know those things?

Crouched on the floor, her white face clenched in her tense fingers, she rocked to and fro. Hadn't Jimmy known? But of course he had! Of course, every one knew that sort of thing. Everybody was born knowing those things! And if he hadn't known, oughtn't she to have taught him? If he really was wicked—— He had been hideously, horribly wicked, but wasn't it her fault? Shouldn't she have known all those things and taught him? But was it any excuse that he didn't know?

No; oh, no, there was no excuse. There would be no one in all the world who would offer or accept any excuse. She sank down again, overwhelmed by

the waves of horror, of shame, and disgrace that swept over her. And yet out of their surge, she rose unsteadily to her feet.

"There must be no shame, no disgrace," she murmured. "That is in my hands!" While her feet were moving to the old rhythm, her thoughts were busily shaping plans. "Thank God that it was I whom she saw!" she murmured once, and then again: "Thank God that she did see me, and that I was the last person she spoke to!"

All through the frenzied hours of the night, she had been speaking her thoughts aloud, but now she looked about her, startled by the sound of her own voice.

"I was the last person," she whispered, "and I promised her! She went out of the world with my promise in her ears. And Jimmy knows, too, that I promised—promised his wife—to take care of his boy!" Very slowly, with a measured strength, she spoke the words: "And no one must know!"

Drooping, exhausted, she clung to the mantel for support, and her eyes rested on the grate full of dead ashes. Close by her ears, the small, cathedral clock chimed six. No one must know! The words were only echoes of themselves, but in a measure they recalled her to herself. No one must know! No. No one should ever know! With an effort that a moment before had seemed impossible, she drew herself up. This shameful thing was no longer Jimmy's secret. It was not Agatha Hilary's secret. Jimmy and Agatha Hilary no longer had any secrets. It was hers, only hers, and she would keep it hers.

Of course, then, no one—none of her household—must know that she had spent the night in anguished pacing of her room. No one must know that anything in all the world was any different than it had been the night before. With hurried fingers, she put out the lights, stealthily she made herself ready for bed, and, some three hours later, when Maggie entered the room, she saw no unusual trace either in it or on her mistress' face.

Neither did Bryce note any unusual

quality in Miss Anthony's voice when she directed him, just as she was leaving the house, to call Doctor Beverley, and tell him that Mrs. Anthony seemed feverish and out of sorts, and would like to see him in the morning. And only Filkins, as he opened the door for his lady to pass out, saw the quiver of her lips as she answered Maggie. For the maid, waiting to hand Miss Anthony her furs, had asked with an intrepidity that, to her, seemed worthy of its cause:

"And if Mr. Carter comes, may I tell him when you will be back?"

And Miss Anthony had answered: "I don't want you to run to the door, Maggie. Filkins will tell Mr. Carter, as he tells every one else, that I am seeing no one."

It was then that Filkins saw the firm lips twitch as they spoke the gentleman's name.

CHAPTER IV.

At the hospital, Miss Anthony dismissed her carriage. A trip to Pleasantville would not be any easy thing to explain, and she knew how the gossip of her comings and goings ran through her household of old servants. Just when she had decided upon the investigation of the marriage certificate she did not know, but she did know that she was permitting herself to have the faintest atom of hope that she might find some solution of the matter other than that her brother was the criminal he now seemed. Her long veil shrouded her face as she entered the building, but when she reached the general reception room, she walked directly toward a mirror, and, with steady hands, threw back the heavy covering. Even to her own eyes her face was unchanged. When she turned from this self-scrutiny to face Mrs. Barrows, she forced her voice into its wonted softness.

"You have carried out my instructions, I hope?"

"Why, nothing has been done yet," the matron answered. "We, that is to say, I hoped that—why, that the poor girl had told you something—that you might know——"

She waited for Miss Anthony to speak.

"No." The word was spoken so easily that it almost surprised Miss Anthony. If she could lie so easily, of course, it had been easy for Jimmy to. But she knew that she could not stop to think of that now. "The girl told me nothing about herself. She—she seemed to be afraid that the baby would not be properly cared for, and I—I promised her that I would—why, make it my especial charge."

Mrs. Barrows was looking intently at her patroness, but the intention was indefinite toward that lady. She had been so very sure that the girl's passionate importunity had been for something more than the physical welfare of the child that was coming to her. And yet, of course, Miss Anthony could not have misunderstood the appeal that was made to her.

"I'm so sorry," she murmured. "I hoped—she seemed so very—why, so very much of a lady!"

"Yes, I thought, too, that she seemed very sweet and refined, but——" Miss Anthony's voice was cool and impersonal, but in her brain was raging the thought: "It's Jimmy's wife I am speaking of in this way; Jimmy's wife!"

"Of course, I appreciate," Mrs. Barrows was saying, "we all of us always appreciate everything that you do, and I understood just what you meant last night, but—well, as I said, I did hope that the girl might be given a decent burial, and——"

"A decent burial," echoed Miss Anthony, "but surely, Mrs. Barrows, you say you understood. I thought you knew that I meant that everything should be done, in every possible way."

"Oh, that, yes."

Miss Anthony realized, as she had often realized when she was with Mrs. Barrows, that her money was of small value in that woman's eyes. If she knew now! But this was not the time to think of that. Mrs. Barrows was still speaking.

"I hoped the girl could be given her rightful name—I hoped there'd be a rightful name for the boy."

Under Miss Anthony's drooping lids a faint tinge of color flamed for an instant. If her very life had depended on it, more than that, even though Jimmy's honor did depend on it, she could not control that throbbing pulse of terror. If the girl could be given Jimmy's name! If the boy could be given Jimmy's name! But she had planned for that.

Mrs. Barrows was still talking, and Miss Anthony forced her ears to listen. The matron's quick eyes had seen the flush of color, but her dull wits had misinterpreted its cause.

"Of course, I know the subject is distasteful. A girl—like you—cannot be supposed to know or think about such things, but I see so much——"

"Miss Drexel," Miss Anthony permitted herself to interrupt the matron, "I called Miss Drexel up last night, to ask if you had discovered anything about the girl, and she—told me that the—baby was remarkably strong and vigorous. Do you suppose I might see him?"

An infringement of the hospital's rules was permissible at the request of the chief patroness, and Mrs. Barrows sent for Miss Drexel and her charge.

"Please don't misunderstand my request," Miss Anthony's quiet voice went on. "I—you know the money doesn't matter at all, and if you will attend to all the details—I mean about securing a small plot of ground in some cemetery, and all that, I will only feel that I am keeping the promise I made her. As for the child——" She knew that she was shrinking from the sound of approaching footsteps, and yet she grasped at the relief of Miss Drexel's pleasant voice.

"I'm so glad you asked to see him, Miss Anthony. We're all just crazy over him." Miss Anthony's heavy white lids fluttered ever so faintly, rebelling against her wish to raise them. But up to the tiny bundle in the nurse's arms she forced her gaze. "Ordinary babies are so painfully ugly," the young nurse went on, "but this one is absolutely perfect."

She lifted the soft, white shawls, and

Miss Anthony saw again the flowerlike face of the girl in the small, white room upstairs. Each feature, every tint was reproduced exactly, and it seemed to her that she could hear the agonized appeal: "Promise me that you will see that he comes into his own name, his own rights!" and her answer: "Yes, I promise."

"How wonderful!" she murmured, and as she said the words the small lids lifted, and the golden eyes of the girl mother were raised to hers.

"Isn't he adorable?" the nurse exclaimed. "Did you ever see so wonderful a baby, Mrs. Barrows?"

Miss Drexel's pride in the child broke through the bounds of punctilious etiquette demanded by the hospital, but neither Miss Anthony nor Mrs. Barrows noticed her.

"As I was saying, Mrs. Barrows," Miss Anthony spoke almost as though there had been no interruption, "in regard to the boy—you know I have often spoken of adopting one of the children here, and I—I am thinking a little that I might take this one—after I consult Mr. Harrison. I—I was interested in the mother, and, in a way, I should always feel that she had—why—chosen me." The hesitations were only those that would be natural to a young girl defending a somewhat unusual course of action. "And"—here it was quite safe for her to lower again the heavy, blue-veined lids—"I am so very much alone just now that it would—I think it would be a pleasure to me—so if—if Mr. Harrison agrees with me. In any event, I will let you know, and, you see, Mrs. Barrows, it is with that view that I want everything done as it should be for the baby's mother."

Miss Drexel, eager to carry throughout the institution the news that the wonderful baby would probably be adopted by Miss Anthony, had already fled from the room, and, to Mrs. Barrows, there seemed nothing unusual or curious in the fact that Miss Anthony rose suddenly and drew her veil closely about her face. Indeed, the matron assured herself, it had undoubtedly been awfully hard for the poor young thing

to talk about such things so soon after her brother's death, and as she watched the slender black figure go out under the high gateway built by that brother, she sighed and said:

"I suppose I might have made it easier for her, too; but I was thinking only of that other girl."

So, if Miss Anthony could only have known it, she had traversed quite safely the first few steps of deception in the safeguarding of her brother's honor.

CHAPTER V.

So accustomed was Miss Anthony to the service and ministrations of others in her transactions with the outside world that the trip to Pleasantville seemed a momentous undertaking, but in its accomplishment it resolved itself into a very simple process. Fortunately, she knew on which one of New Jersey's roads the town lay, so she had to ask no questions of any one. Seated in the stuffy car, still shrouding her face from the other passengers with her veil, she raised one of its folds and looked out upon the marshes that were just beginning to push themselves out from the thralldom of winter.

"It's so silly of me to have come," she thought. "It can't, of course, have been any one but Jimmy, and yet—"

Her eyes followed the little blue streams that, having rid themselves of their icy covering, were threading their way in and out of the lank brown stems of the marsh grass. "He saw you when you were all pink with mallows," her thoughts ran on, and, for a second, they shaped themselves on the lines of a poem Jimmy and she had loved:

While the riotous noonday of the June day
did shine,
You held me fast in your heart, and I held
you fast in mine.

"Oh, why didn't you take him then and hold him fast before ever he did this awful thing!" The passionate words were almost articulate, and she shrank closer to the window, wondering if she had spoken them aloud.

In her mind, the awful thing that Jimmy had done was the marriage with

Agatha Hilary, the marriage that had taken place long, long before he had met Mabel Stuart. She knew well enough that his infatuation for Mabel, the short engagement, the precipitate marriage, were only component parts of one of the whirlwinds that had swept over Jimmy's irregular life. Had that first marriage, she wondered, been only another cyclonic affair of even shorter duration, that had left not even a memory of itself in his mind? Had Jimmy been absolutely lacking in all moral sense? Could he have been so hopelessly degenerate?

Then the faint doubt that had suggested this trip to Pleasantville reasserted itself, and, in her mind, she hotly demanded how she could ever forgive herself, how Jimmy could ever forgive her, if she found that she had been wronging him through all these awful hours.

Arrived at her destination, she entered one of the shabby station carriages, and directed the boy to drive her to St. Luke's Church. Not for a second did she forget that she must act with a circumspection that would awaken no suspicion.

When they drew up in front of the church, she was glad to see the white headstones of the graves that surrounded it, for she thought that her heavy mourning would make it seem natural enough to her driver that she should desire to visit one of them. Dismissing him with the statement that she would walk back to the station, she entered the churchyard, and walked at hazard down one of its quiet paths. At the end she stopped and read the inscription on a low stone pillow at her feet: "Sacred to the memory of Josiah Hilary and Agatha, his wife."

Abruptly she turned away, conscious only of a rising sense of anger at fate for flinging these people always before her. And yet part of her quest had already been satisfied. The girl evidently and undoubtedly had lived there in that town, and, just as evidently and undoubtedly, she had been alone and unfriended when—

Her hurrying footsteps had brought

her almost to the doorway of the low, gray church, and, as she raised her eyes, she saw a man in clerical dress who had been watching her. Her veil covered her face, and she knew that it screened her features so completely that he could not tell whether or no she was some one that he knew. She was tempted to let it hang between her and his searching eyes; but, realizing that a veiled woman is at all times open to suspicious thoughts, she flung it back. Forcing a faint smile in answer to the look of inquiry she now saw on his face, she asked simply:

"You are Mr. Grieg?"

"No, I am Mr. Grieg's successor," he answered. "My name is Randolph." His glance at the tablet that hung by the church door directed her own eyes toward it, and she read the name Howard G. Randolph. "I have been here since July," he added.

"Since July!" The words were breathed rather than spoken.

"Yes, Mr. Grieg had a serious illness in June, the latter part of June. I supplied his place for a time. Then, when he was sent away, I came here permanently. You wanted to see Mr. Grieg?" He read the indecision on her face, and asked the question to help her. The simplicity of her mourning indicated neither condition nor position, and she had vouchsafed no name in answer to his own. "Perhaps I might assist you. You were looking for some friend, some name?"

"I—I am a stranger here." Miss Anthony's voice was slightly husky with an emotion that the clergyman could not read. "Some people—Hilary was the name."

"You came directly from the grave," he answered quietly. "Mr. Hilary and his wife died some years ago."

"But there was a daughter, was there not?" Miss Anthony had regained her self-control, and in the dark eyes that were raised to his, Mr. Randolph could read neither terror nor guile of any kind. "A daughter, Agatha," she repeated. "I think she was married here at this church, in July—or possibly in June."



"Of course we never talk about anything but you."

"Not in July, I am sure of that," the minister answered, "for I was here then, and if it was in June, it must have been very early in the month, for, as I said, Mr. Grieg was seriously ill during the latter part of the month." Again he read the indecision on her face. Again he offered help. "But we can look at the records if you care to. They are here in the vestry."

Miss Anthony herself wondered at the quiet tone in which she answered: "If we might?"

The man turned and opened the door. Together they entered the quiet little church. A rift of sunlight fell through the colored glass window above the low wooden altar and broke in particolored fragments over the shadows of the place. Miss Anthony suddenly remembered the vivid June sunshine that had enveloped the wonderful colors in the

tapestry bricks of Jimmy's wall at the hospital, and she wondered if that same sunlight had shone through the garish glass and rested on Jimmy and Agatha Hilary.

Shocked by the idleness of the thought, she hurried after Mr. Randolph, who had already entered the vestry room.

"You said that Mr. Grieg was dead?" she asked.

"No; oh, no," he answered. "But the trouble was with his lungs, and it was thought best to send him away to a more even climate." He was turning over the leaves of a small ledger. "Yes, here is the record. It was on June tenth, just a few days, that must have been, before Mr. Grieg was taken ill. Agatha Hilary and—and James Bishop Anthony. The writing is not very clear or distinct."

His eyes were on the book, and he did not see the change that swept over the girl's face. It could not have grown whiter than it had been, but the white resolved itself into an ashen gray. Her hand that had rested lightly upon the back of a chair clinched the wooden rail with so fierce a grip that the seam of the black glove burst open. And, curiously enough, it was the sight of the white skin showing under the broken seam that recalled Miss Anthony to herself, that warned her that she must not yield herself to the wave of darkness that was sweeping down upon her. Slipping the telltale hand into her muff, she leaned toward the desk on which the book lay.

"You see?" Mr. Randolph questioned. "It is here."

"Yes," she answered quietly, and she did see the fine, delicate letters that spelled Agatha Hilary, and the sprawling, schoolboy characters of Jimmy's signature. The boy had never outgrown his attempted copy of the stereotyped handwriting that had been set before him in his childish days, and here, shaken doubtless by the emotions of the moment, the letters were more formless even than was their wont. But that they were Jimmy's, Miss Anthony's hurried gaze revealed to her without a possibility of doubt.

"I see that Mr. Grieg's housekeeper and the sexton were the only witnesses," Mr. Randolph was explaining. "The woman is no longer here, but I can send for Mark if you care to question him."

"Oh, no, it is not necessary." Miss Anthony heard the words, and knew that she must have spoken them. "It was only a small curiosity on my part. I—I remembered Agatha Hilary, and I heard that she had been married."

For the second time an hysterical sob rose in her throat and choked her. Here in this place where Jimmy had perjured his soul she was perjuring hers in lies for his sake. Not knowing whether she could control the tears or laughter in which the hysteria might express itself, she turned hurriedly away. But as she traversed the short aisle that led

toward the sunlight and the open air, she found that she was arguing with herself. After all, it wasn't here that Jimmy had perjured himself. He had committed no crime here. This marriage with Agatha Hilary was his real marriage, his only marriage, this—

"It would give me great pleasure to look the matter up for you," Mr. Randolph's courteous voice fell on her ears. "I might find out where they went after the marriage—where they are now—"

"Oh, no," Miss Anthony answered. "Please, I wouldn't think of giving you that trouble. As I said, it was only the idlest curiosity on my part, and I should not have taken even so much of your time as I have. Good morning."

It was the left hand that was covered with the broken glove, and, so sure was she now of her self-control, that she offered him her right hand before she raised it to draw her veil over her face—to screen it from his curious eyes, to hide it from all the world.

And only the fact that Mr. Randolph was at once absorbed in a matter of vital importance to himself prevented him from making the researches that he assured himself he would make as he watched the slender, shaken figure walk down the village street toward the depot.

CHAPTER VI.

When Filkins opened the door for Miss Anthony, he reported to her that Mrs. Anthony had asked that she should come immediately to her room.

"Very well," Miss Anthony answered absently, "but I want you to take a note to Mr. Harrison, Filkins. I will write it at once, and I want him to have it before he leaves the office."

So thoroughly had she rehearsed the words of this note that her pen hesitated not for a single second in its writing.

MY DEAR MR. HARRISON: You will, perhaps, be surprised to hear that I have at last decided to carry out the idea that I have had for some time, and to adopt one of the children born at my hospital. I am very desolate, as you know, and this will, at least, give me an interest. There is a baby there now,

and, according to Mrs. Barrows' report, he is just what I want.

Please hurry the matter as much as possible, because I have promised Mrs. Anthony that I will go abroad with her if Doctor Beverley thinks that it would be wise for her to go, and I shall want every detail attended to before I leave. I don't believe that the child has been entered on the hospital register, but I shall telephone Mrs. Barrows at once that he is to be entered as John Hilary, the latter name having been the one given by his mother. I shall have the name changed to Hilary Anthony, and shall have him so baptized, for I want it to be understood at once that he is mine by adoption, and that his place in the world should be so established. Again may I ask you to hurry every detail? It will greatly oblige me, I assure you. Always sincerely yours,

CATHERINE ANTHONY.

Entirely forgetful of the message she had received from her sister-in-law, she went up to her own room. But, before she rang for Maggie, she took up the telephone and called for the Santa Margarita Hospital.

"Mrs. Barrows?" she asked, and added, when Mrs. Barrows' affirmative answer reached her ear: "I have discovered nothing, Mrs. Barrows." There was not the slightest hesitation in her voice. "It seems to be a case of closed identity. I do not see that we can do anything further in the matter. I have given Mr. Harrison instructions to make all the arrangements for my adoption of the child. What is that? Was Mr. Harrison willing? Why, he has no will in the matter, Mrs. Barrows. He will simply carry out my instructions. And you will please enter the birth on the register as John Hilary. I will attend to the change of name later."

There was a finality about Miss Anthony's tone that brooked no answer, save an acquiescent: "Very well, Miss Anthony."

With a faint sigh of relief, the girl hung up the receiver. "Can I make it any more positive, any more definite?" she murmured. "Oh, yes, I must tell Mabel. I—I wish she would marry again!" A little flame of color ran across her face. "I wish she would marry—soon!"

Ringling for Maggie, she resigned herself into her maid's sympathetic Irish

hands, and lay back in a low chair in front of the fire, with her loosened hair falling in waves about her while the girl's soft fingers moved back and forth across her tired head. For the first time in the twenty-four hours she slipped out from under the tension that had held her; but, curiously enough, the thought that wandered at will through her brain was the last one that had occurred to her. If only Mabel would marry some one!

She knew with how much disgust and horror this idea would have been received had any one suggested it to her the day before, the idea that Mabel could or would forget Jimmy. But now it seemed to Catherine Anthony that she would welcome any suitor for Mabel's hand, and she found herself running over the names of the men who had surrounded Mabel when Jimmy had made his impetuous entrance into her court. The reflections were interrupted by the burr of the telephone on her desk.

"I cannot speak to any one, Maggie," she murmured wearily.

The maid took up the receiver, and said: "Yes, Mr. Harrison, Miss Anthony is here, but she is resting. Can I give her a message?"

But before Mr. Harrison could speak, Miss Anthony had taken the phone from the girl's hand.

"I am here now," she said simply.

"I have just received your note, Miss Catherine," the lawyer answered, "but I cannot—I must ask you to let me see you before I—"

"But there is no necessity for that," the girl answered, "and the matter is urgent. I told you that I might be going away immediately."

"But—"

"I do not think there are any 'buts,' Mr. Harrison."

"But I cannot consent—"

Again she cut his words off. "I did not know that it was necessary for me to ask any one's consent."

The tone, even more than the words, warned the lawyer that he was combating the Anthony obstinacy with all its intolerance of interference.

"As an old friend of your father's, my dear," he urged, "I am only asking you to let me see you about the matter."

"Nothing that you could say would make the slightest difference," she answered, "and an interview would only mean wasted time."

"But you don't realize——"

"I realize the whole situation, Mr. Harrison—just the responsibilities I am undertaking, and every possible detail. I am very determined in the matter."

"Don't you know that your brother would never have given his consent to such a thing?"

"My brother, if he knows what I am doing—and I think he does—would approve of it wholly."

The lawyer heard the light quaver that crept into her voice, but he knew that only in those tremulous tones had she been able to speak of Jimmy in these last few weeks.

"But have you consulted Mrs. Anthony?"

"I do not see that Mrs. Anthony's position in the family demands consultation in such a matter."

A certain impatience was creeping into her voice. The lawyer answered this.

"Please, Miss Catherine. I am only thinking, only speaking for your own welfare. Take the child, if you want him, and do with him anything you have a mind to. But don't make the step irrevocable. Wait six months or even three, and see if you look at the matter in the same way. To give your name—to tie up a part of your fortune——"

"But there is such a hideous lot of it," murmured the girl, "and can't you see what an injustice it would be to a child, to take him for a time into a life of luxury and then to throw him out of it?"

Mentally, Mr. Harrison ejaculated: "Damn the child!" But, aloud, he only answered the first words she had spoken.

"Not hideous. My dear girl, can't you see that you are taking an unhealthy view of everything? Let the matter rest until you come back from

your trip with Mrs. Anthony, and then you——"

"No, Mr. Harrison," she interrupted, "please don't argue with me any more. Nothing, no one in all the world can make me change my mind. I am determined to do it, and to do it now."

"You say *no one*." The lawyer caught at the offered straw. "It is a delicate matter to suggest, but won't you please think that some day some one may come into your life who might object to the encumbrance of an adopted child, some one for whom you would want your fortune free and unencumbered? Pardon me, but your welfare is dear to me as my own daughter's, and you may, you undoubtedly will, have children of your own. Think what this hospital waif would be to them!"

Mr. Harrison could not see Miss Anthony's pink nails grow white as they clenched the black receiver, he could not see the blue-veined lids close heavily over the dark eyes, and even his attentive ears did not catch the new note in her voice as she answered:

"I shall never marry, Mr. Harrison. I do appreciate all that you have said, all that you are trying to do for me, but won't you please understand that I know what I am doing, that I mean just what I say? I have always wanted to try this experiment, I think I have talked it over with you—of matching environment against heredity. Of course I don't know what the inheritance may be in this case, because we know nothing of either the father or the mother. But the child pleases me, and, believe me, it is only because the idea is so new to you that it seems so objectionable. It has been in my mind for a long time, and so seems feasible. I have considered every detail, and—won't you please let this be final? Won't you please carry out my instructions?"

The tone in which the last word was spoken warned Mr. Harrison that he had said and done enough in offering his objections, and with only one or two formal questions of detail, he let Miss Anthony close the conversation.

Maggie listened with attentive ears to every word that Miss Anthony spoke.

When she gleaned the information that her mistress intended to adopt a baby, she accepted it just as she would any other caprice of that mistress. The adoption of a baby meant little more to her than the purchase of a poodle or a monkey. But when she heard her announce that she would never marry she rounded her red lips and Irish eyes in an unspoken ejaculation. With surreptitious fingers she lifted Dick Carter's photograph, in the heavy silver heart, and stood it on the mantel shelf directly in front of the chair in which Miss Anthony had been sitting.

"You'll be having something to say about that," she thought, as she flicked a bit of dust from the glass with the corner of her ruffled apron.

In utter exhaustion of mind and body, Catherine Anthony sank down into the low chair, but she still struggled to preserve appearances before the eyes of her maid.

"I'm going to adopt a baby!" She spoke to Maggie, but as she raised her eyes toward the maid they encountered Dick Carter's steadfast gaze, and only for a second was she conscious of the black darkness that descended upon her. "Quick!" she gasped. "Some brandy, Maggie!"

And then, for the first time in her life, Catherine Anthony fainted.

CHAPTER VIII.

At no period during his twenty-one years had Hilary Anthony given Miss Anthony occasion to regret for a single second her adoption of him. The first ten of these years he had spent in the old house. His constant companion had been Mabel Anthony's little daughter, Amabelle, who had been born some months after James Anthony's death. He had romped and played with her, quarreled and fought, kissed and made up again.

Throughout all that period Miss Anthony had mothered him with a care and solicitude that was a mystery to herself as well as to her friends. Then Mrs. Anthony, who, contrary to every one's expectations, had refused all the

suitors to her pretty face and immense fortune, decided to take her little girl abroad, insisting that only in the older countries could a girl be given a proper education and training.

Left alone with the lad, Catherine Anthony devoted herself to the selection of tutors and schools, and, with an absolute exclusion of self and selfish interests, absorbed herself completely in his work and his pleasure, in all the comedies and tragedies that make up a boy's life. The close intimate contact with the young life kept her marvelously young, and as she lay back in the low chair that was drawn close to the driftwood logs on the hearth she looked no older than when she stood waiting for her carriage in the reception room of the Santa Margarita Hospital on the day when Hilary was born. In fact, she looked even younger, for then the heavy mourning that she wore and the lines of the tense grief for her brother's death had aged her by a score of years, and now, in her soft blue gown, and with the dark mass of her hair framing her face, she looked little older than the boy who sat facing her.

She was immeasurably proud of the tall, broad-shouldered figure that was, at the moment, crumpled up like a jackknife in the huge leather chair, for Hilary's elbows were on his knees and his chin was cupped in his hands, while he watched her almost as intently as she was watching him. The dancing flames brought out the tawny lights of his hair and eyes, and shadowed the deeply cleft chin. Asking herself whether she could care for him more, whether he would be dearer to her than he was if he were in reality her son, she wondered if the actual and physical fact of motherhood had the power to awaken depths and breadths of love of which she was ignorant.

"Do you know, Trina," Hilary's voice broke the silence that had lasted for some moments, "you are the most beautiful thing in the world, and I wish you'd never wear any other color than that light blue."

"Your flattery's too broad," Miss Anthony laughed easily. It was always

so easy to laugh when Hilary was there. "And I think this color would look rather ridiculous in some places, don't you?"

"It isn't flattery," the boy asserted. "It's just the plain truth, and that's why I said it so plainly. I don't see why if a color suits you it isn't suitable for all times and places. I was thinking"—he paused for a second—"that the first time I remember you, you had on a dress that was just that color, and I—I liked it because it matched the little blue veins in your wrists and your eyelids. Of course, I didn't know that they were veins, and I don't suppose I knew that they were blue, but I liked them because they looked like little threads of the dress. Last night old Carter said——"

"For pity's sake, Hilary," and again her easy laughter rippled her words, "why do you say *old* Carter? He isn't old."

"Well, I don't suppose it is a very respectful way to speak of him, but he does seem awfully old compared to us!"

"My dear boy, I've told you a dozen times that Dick Carter was at school with my brother, and you know he was a year younger than I am."

"I'd believe almost anything you said, Trina," the boy returned, "just because you said it, but some things are too absurd, and that's one of them."

Miss Anthony waived the discussion of Mr. Carter's age, but retained him in the conversation.

"What were you saying about Mr. Carter?"

The boy's ears heard no especial note of interest in the question. "Oh, nothing much. Only he was saying that he liked that mauve gown you had on last night. But of course he doesn't know you as well as I do."

"He's known me longer than you have!"

"Yes, I suppose he has." Hilary's reminiscent eyes were on the fire now. "I seem to remember him as far back as I remember anything, and, of course, he's always here; but you and I are so much to each other, and he's just an outsider!"

"Yes, an outsider," she echoed the words. "We're just inside of our own little world, aren't we? But if you and Mr. Carter," she added more lightly, "can't find anything more suitable to talk about while you are smoking together than me and my gowns, I think I'd better stay with you."

"I wish you would, Trina." For a moment he stood erect, stretched his arms out, and shook himself to start the blood that had been stagnated by his cramped position. Then he sat down on the rug at her feet, with his back to the fire. "Of course we never talk about anything but you. I suppose he knows that's the thing I like best to talk about, but it would be more fun if you'd stay with us. Then we could talk to you instead of about you, don't you see?"

The eager affection in the boy's eyes closed the door that an old sorrow was pushing open in Miss Anthony's heart. She laid a caressing hand on his hair and murmured:

"But you're such a silly boy, Hilary, when the world's so full of such exciting things to discuss."

At this moment Filkins, who, in the course of nature, had been promoted to the post of butler in the Anthony household, came into the room with some letters.

"Shall I light the room?" he asked.

"Not yet, Filkins," Miss Anthony answered. "I think we like the firelight best." Tossing the letters down to Hilary, she added: "You can see what they are by that light, can't you?"

"There's only one real letter," he answered, "and that's from Mrs. Anthony."

"Well, put on another log, and read it to me," Miss Anthony said. "I think firelight's just the thing for one of Mabel's letters."

"But suppose there's something private in it?"

"Oh, there never is," she laughed. "Her letters never have anything in them except a sort of running diary of the men who have proposed to her, and the various ways in which she has refused them, telling them all that her life

is devoted to Amabelle and Amabelle's welfare."

"Why don't you like Mrs. Anthony, Trina?"

The question was abrupt, and it may have been its form and not its substance that startled Miss Anthony out of her pretty composure.

"Why, boy," she exclaimed, "I do like her. I was not saying anything against her, was I? She's been an adorable mother to Amabelle, and——"

"It wasn't that you were saying anything against her, Trina," he interrupted, "but I was just wondering if I really didn't like her as I remember her, or if it was just the way you speak about her that makes me feel the way I do about her."

"But Hilary! My dear!" Miss Anthony leaned forward, with a nervous eagerness. "I don't always speak about her in any way. I don't know what you mean. She's always seemed childish to me, but—oh, Hilary, I wouldn't for all the world want any one to think that I could speak against her in any way!"

"Oh, you don't, Trina," he urged, "and I dare say it's just my memory of her that gives color to your words. I—I don't believe that she ever liked me very much."

His eyes were downcast now, and Miss Anthony knew from the tone in which the words were spoken that into his mind had come the one thought that must ever be unspoken between them, the one sorrow for which she had no consolation.

"Boy, dear," she said softly, and again her hand caressed the tawny head. "But your log will be all burned out. Won't you read the letter?"

He opened the envelope, but followed the first words with an interruption: "'Dear Trina,' I wish you wouldn't let her call you *Trina*. I wish you wouldn't let any one but me call you that. Why can't she say Catherine, the way Mr. Carter does, the way all your other friends do?" Into his voice crept the note of merriment that Miss Anthony so loved. "Do you remember the fight that I had with little Amabelle when she tried to make me say *Aunt Trina*, as

she did, and I argued that you might be her aunt, but that you were just my Trina? I know she bit me, and am quite sure that I struck her. I wonder if she is the same funny little girl that she was then!"

With an effort, Miss Anthony recalled herself from that past in which every word that any one spoke had been a dagger thrust into her heart. She wondered why, on this especial night, so many things should have recalled those wretched days, but forced herself to answer lightly:

"I really suppose that she's grown up to some extent. Perhaps if you'll read the letter you'll find something about her, although Mabel rarely says anything about her."

"Well, here goes, then!" He squared his shoulders, and held the paper so that the firelight shone full upon it.

"DEAR TRINA: I suppose you will be very much surprised to hear that I am coming back to America almost immediately. We sail on the sixteenth, in fact. I am quite sure that neither you nor any one else can find the slightest fault with the devotion I have given to Amabelle. It's been a pleasure, of course, but a duty, too. I told myself when she was only a wee baby that I must remember always that I was the only person she had to look out for her, and see that she grew up to be a credit to her father's name. And I hope I have remembered it always. I've never given a single thought to any of the people who have wanted to distract my mind from Jimmy's daughter, but now it seems to me that the time has come when I have the right, really the right, to think a little of my own life. Amabelle is a perfectly adorable girl, and it will be the easiest thing, since she is a beauty and awfully rich, to marry her off quickly. I don't want her to have a foreign husband, though, so I am going to bring her home, and I don't believe that American men will object to her foreign training, do you? Of course you can't judge now, but I am sure when you see her you will agree with me that it will not take any time at all to settle the matter. Sir Hugh and I have been great friends for a long time, and I've always thought that we would be quite content to stay *friends*, but now we both feel that there's more than just friendship, and I've told him that I will marry him just as soon as Amabelle is safely married and settled."

"Well, of all the cold-blooded——" Hilary's indignation found no suitable word. "Trina, did you ever hear any-

thing to equal it? She calmly says that she wants to marry the girl off to the first person who will take her, in order that she may marry the idiot she's fallen in love with!"

"Oh, she doesn't say quite that," Miss Anthony's tone fell with a certain chill on the boy's anger. "She has been a most devoted mother, and it's very nice of her to bring the girl back to the chance of an American husband. She might just have married her off to some one over there!"

She was interrupted by a shout of laughter. Hilary's eyes had glanced at a paragraph farther down on the page.

"Now, you'll be sorry you asked me to read your private letters, Trina. Listen to this:

"Of course I'd like to stay at the old house and have Amabelle married there, but if that great oaf of an adopted boy of yours is with you we will have to find some other place, although we will come directly to you when we arrive."

"Now, Trina, why does she call me a great oaf? I dare say I was all knobs and joints when she saw me last, but she might do me the credit of knowing that I've outgrown them! Well, me for Idlewyld while she's here! Let me see, where was I? Oh, yes.

"We will come directly to you when we arrive. I don't want to say too much to Amabelle, but do please be prepared to receive my dear girl with open arms and to



Amabelle had been in the music room playing softly on the piano.

help me to place her, as we say over here, as quickly as possible. Sir Hugh is, of course, terribly impatient, and he did suggest that I might just send her over to you and let you make the necessary efforts and arrangements, but I should never feel that I had done my duty by Jimmy's baby if I did not attend to her marriage myself.

"Ever your devoted

"MABEL.

"Oh, do please have a list of suitable young men ready for me—won't you?—men whose interests are in America. Sir Hugh thinks that to have a married daughter over here would make me seem unnecessarily old. I'm so sure that no man could see Amabelle twice without falling in love with her!"

"So that's why she doesn't want a foreign husband," mused Miss Anthony, and Hilary now might have questioned the tone in which she spoke of Mabel's motive, but he ignored it. "When was the letter written?" she asked.

"Why, it isn't dated. Oh, yes, the third, but it wasn't mailed until the twelfth."

"And when did she say they would sail?"

"On the sixteenth, and, Trina, to-

day's the twentieth, isn't it? Well, me for Idlewylde by to-night's train, so that you can have the house properly fumigated! And you can tell her that I don't like her any better than she likes me!"

"Do sit down, Hilary, and don't be foolish. Of course they'll have to stay here, but that's no reason why——"

"Oh, yes, it is, my dear Trina, the very best of reasons, and I'm going to telephone Carter now and ask him to go down with me. I suppose even you'll admit that he's too old to go on your list of suitable young men!" He was bending over her, his hands resting lightly on her shoulders, and he saw the faint flutter of the blue-veined lids that answered his last words. "Is it going to be so awfully hard, Trina? Well, just as soon as you've received them with proper honors and ovations, you can come down to Idlewylde, too. Carter and I will have the house all ready for you."

Brushing her cheek lightly with his lips, he hurried from the room before Miss Anthony found words to offer in answer.

CHAPTER IX.

In compliance with a wireless request received from her sister-in-law, Catherine Anthony did not go to the pier to meet the travelers, but awaited them in the old-fashioned library of the house on Washington Square.

During the two days of preparation that had been given to her, she had grievously missed her boy and the merry contagion of his presence. But even to her biased mind it did not seem that his absence and that alone could account for the state of nervous apprehension in which she waited for Mrs. Anthony and her daughter. When she dressed to receive them she put on the pale-blue gown that Hilary had so highly commended two nights before, but as she glanced at herself in the mirror, she thought:

"Mabel will think I look a perfect fool in a frock like this. I suppose she thinks of me as a frumpy old woman by this time!"

She had given an hour of her personal attention to the arrangement of the library, brightening the dark old room with masses of flowers. But now, when she entered it, she looked around her with deprecating eyes. Even in the old days, Mabel had disliked the old-fashioned room, and had repeatedly begged her to have it modernized. Miss Anthony realized that now it would seem dingier than ever, and—the humor of the idea brought a faint smile to her eyes—in no way fit for the courting of the extremely modern young woman who was being brought to it.

Her gaze rested for a second on Hilary's photograph, that stood on the mantel shelf, and she murmured to it:

"We like it, though, don't we, boy, you and I and Dick!"

Obedying a sudden impulse, she gathered up all of Hilary's pictures that were in the room and thrust them into one of the drawers of her desk.

"She really doesn't like you, and I'm not going to share you with her even in that way."

She sat down in her low chair by the fire, and let her thoughts wander down to Idlewylde, where Hilary and Dick Carter were staying. She knew just how they would be filling in the short October afternoon, and she knew, too, that they were wishing for her even as she was wishing for them. She heard the crunching of the auto as it stopped at the door, but she sat quite still. Something seemed to hold her fast, to destroy her will to move. With a supreme effort she threw it off, but not until the door had been opened by Filkins' successor. So it was with a little rush that she crossed the long room, with both hands extended in welcome.

"Oh, Trina! Such a time as we've had!" It was the same old petulant voice. "But how absurdly young you are! You haven't changed an atom, have you? However have you done it? It was good of you to send Maggie and Filkins. I suppose they're still struggling with the luggage!"

Time had been but a little less kind to Mrs. Anthony than it had been to

Catherine. Face and figure were rounder, fuller than they had been in the old days, but the eyes held the old childish stare, the mouth wore the old babyish pout.

For only a second Miss Anthony's gaze rested on her, and then she looked at the still, tall figure by the door. Was it Jim's face or her own old self? A little graver than Jimmy's, a little more soft and yielding than she had ever been.

"Oh, Jimmy boy!" It was the only greeting that Miss Anthony could offer to her niece.

"Yes, isn't she absurdly like him?" cooed Mrs. Anthony. "I hoped you'd see the resemblance. But she's so like you, too, especially since you've stayed so frightfully young." From her tone it might have been supposed that she looked upon Miss Anthony's youthful appearance as a distinct injury to herself. "Amabelle, my dear," she went on querulously, "did the sisters teach you to stand stock-still that way without speaking a word?"

Amabelle was no longer standing still, however, for Catherine Anthony had put both arms about her neck and was kissing the soft, scarlet lips.

"Oh, Aunt Trina," breathed the girl, "I didn't know how much I wanted to come to you. I'd almost forgotten how dearly I loved you."

"Now, Amabelle," her mother warned, "you know I've told you that the only fault I have to find with you is that you are too intense! Please don't show your worst side to your aunt. She's very lovely, don't you think, Trina?"

The mother was looking at the daughter through her gold lorgnette as though she were appraising some bit of merchandise.

"She's very dear," answered Miss Anthony, linking her arm in the girl's arm and caressing her with her eyes. "I hadn't forgotten for an instant how much I loved you. Would you like to go to your rooms, or shall we have tea first?"

"Amabelle doesn't drink tea, yet," answered Mrs. Anthony. "It's so

wretched for the complexion, and complexion counts more than anything else in a first impression, don't you think? Sir Hugh advised me——"

"Did he come over with you?" Miss Anthony could not withhold from her voice all the resentment aroused by this apparent valuation of the girl, but Mrs. Anthony gave it no heed.

"Oh, dear, no," she answered. "He did talk of it, but we decided that I would probably be detained for a very short time and that it wouldn't be worth while. I wish you'd really tell me what you think of Amabelle. Mrs. Antzell, who was on the boat—the Mrs. Antzell, you know—told me that she thought the girl would take awfully well over here, and that short engagements were very much the fad just now."

"Well, if Amabelle will sit here quite close to me while we have our tea," answered Catherine Anthony, "I will see what I really do think of her. Come, dear."

She drew the girl quite close to her on the low couch, and took both her hands in hers. In answer to the laughter in her aunt's voice, in the dark eyes that scanned her, a faint smile flashed across Amabelle's face.

"Ah, that's what I was waiting for," exclaimed Miss Anthony, kissing the scarlet lips again. "I think she'll do very nicely, Mabel."

The half-hearted praise was warmed by a ripple of laughter as Miss Anthony rose to serve the tea, and Amabelle, echoing it, followed her aunt and perched herself on the arm of her chair.

"I never saw two creatures so ridiculously alike," pouted Mrs. Anthony. "I don't see how I'm to——" Breaking off, she exclaimed: "The room is really charming, Trina. I used to hate it, you know, but it isn't in any sense a woman's room. By the way, where is Hilary?"

"Oh, yes, Hilary! I'd almost forgotten Hilary!" The girl's arm was about Miss Anthony's neck, and the slight to her beloved boy passed almost unnoticed.

"He is down at Idlewyld," she an-

swered the mother's question. "He is very fond of the place, and spends a great deal of time there. Dick Carter is there with him." She answered the question before it was asked, and added hurriedly: "I think Amabelle will like the new music room. It was only finished last year, and it is quite up to date." She caressed the hand that rested on her shoulder. "It's very attractive, and very feminine, and altogether suited to—why, to Amabelle."

Mrs. Anthony made a mental note of the hurried reference to Dick Carter; but, outwardly, she said:

"Mrs. Antzell told me that she would bring her nephew, Carter Neergaard, to call immediately. She certainly did appreciate Amabelle, and, of course, her word counts for a great deal in her family."

"Carter Neergaard's a nice boy," Miss Anthony answered, and again the resentment in her voice was faintly audible. "He is a sort of cousin of Dick Carter's, you know, and a great friend of Hilary's. Come and see the music room, dear."

She slipped her arm about the girl's waist, and led her down the long library into the new room that had been built on at the back of the old house.

The heavy blue portières had hardly fallen behind them, however, when Amabelle stopped abruptly.

"You really mustn't mind mamma so much, Aunt Trina. I don't, really, I don't. And it is quite right for her to want me to be married as quickly as possible. Sir Hugh explained it all to me the night before we left London, and I see it just as they do now, even if it did seem a little queer just at first. But mamma has been a dear to give up as much of her life to me as she has done, and now I—why, I want to help her in every way that I can."

"Has Sir Hugh any other name?"

Miss Anthony covered her irritation with the laughing question. It seemed to her that never in her life had she heard anything so outrageously cold-blooded as the disposition that these two people were about to make of the lovely child by her side.

"Oh, why, yes, didn't mamma tell you?" Amabelle answered, with a pretty eagerness. "He's Sir Hugh Cantrell, one of the Cantrells, of Hurley. It's an awfully good family, and he's very rich, and it's all going to be so charming for mamma. I really do appreciate all that she is willing to do for me to simplify things—in the way of settlements, and all that. You see, she has explained it all to me."

"You poor baby!" murmured Miss Anthony. "But won't you please look at the room I've brought you to see? If we'd built it for you, it couldn't suit you better. Hilary and I did it together."

But Amabelle's eyes refused to leave her aunt's face.

"If only you'll tell me, Aunt Trina, that you won't mind the things mamma says about me."

"I won't mind anything," Miss Anthony hurried to assure her, "if only you are not unhappy!"

"Well, I'm going to be very happy," the girl answered gravely, "and you'll help us, won't you?"

By the appealing eyes and lips, Miss Anthony was won into the matrimonial alliance against the child more quickly than she could have been by any arguments of the mother or of the mother's English lover.

"To the best of my ability, I'll help," Miss Anthony answered. "What shall I do first? Telephone Carter Neergaard to come to dinner?"

"I think mamma would say that it would be better to wait—until his aunt had—had spoken to him."

The worldly wisdom on the innocent childish lips brought quick tears to Miss Anthony's eyes, at the same time that they forced a ripple of laughter from her lips.

"Well, mamma shall direct us in all things," she agreed, "and Carter's only one of a dozen nice boys that we know."

"The room is quite perfect for her!" Mrs. Anthony's approbation was expressed from the threshold of the room. "Of course, you planned it for yourself, Trina, dear; so, perhaps,

there is one advantage in the fact that you look so ridiculously like twin sisters or something of that sort. Was it your idea to have this deliciously cool blue and white and all the teakwood furniture? It's just you yourself—or Amabelle, and yet it leaves you the dominating note of the whole thing. It really is a masterpiece."

"Hilary did the room," Miss Anthony answered. "You know he is going in for something of this sort—decoration, I mean."

"You're not going to let him do anything of that sort." Mrs. Anthony shrugged her shoulders. "But, perhaps, you have discovered that environment is not everything!"

Miss Anthony laughed away the disparagement of her protégé.

"Hilary and I are working out a lot of theories together, and this idea of decoration is rather broad. Whether he will do anything practical with it, we don't know yet. But he says that Americans are utterly lacking in individuality because they have no background, and he thinks that if, beginning exteriorly or interiorly, whichever you please to call it, we would surround ourselves with a daily and visible background that suited each one of us individually, we might grow into something worth while—after a while. But, of course, you are not interested in Hilary's theories, are you?"

The challenging question was in answer to the slight sneer that she saw on Mrs. Anthony's face.

"But it's absurd," that lady exclaimed, "for a boy like that to talk about background. For pity's sake—"

"Look at Amabelle now," Miss Anthony interrupted.

The girl was standing under a heavily carved teakwood arch that had been set in over a small alcove in one corner of the room. The soft blue linen of her gown melted into the shadowy blue silk that hung the walls, and the young face, radiant and alert, looked out as from an old canvas.

"Oh, think what it must be to know something like that," she cried, "to know it for your very own. I have

never known anything but what I have been told. I have never thought anything except what some one has thought before me."

"And that is quite enough for any girl to know or to think," her mother answered coldly. "Shall we go up now and dress for dinner, Trina?"

Miss Anthony, contrite as though she, herself, had been chided by the severe voice, led her guests to the apartments that had been made ready for them.

CHAPTER X.

Dinner had been over for an hour or more. During the latter half of that time Amabelle had been in the music room playing softly on the piano. Mrs. Anthony had been talking about the two subjects nearest to her heart—the charms of Sir Hugh and the manoeuvres of the campaign upon which she was about to enter for Amabelle's settlement in life. Miss Anthony had listened with all the patience she could summon, and had answered only in monosyllables.

"The child plays very prettily, don't you think?" asked the mother.

"I have been listening to her," Miss Anthony answered with her first accent of eagerness. "It is more than pretty; it is exquisite!"

"From the very first, I begged the sisters to let her music be only an accomplishment," Mrs. Anthony's plaintive voice murmured, "but Sister Marie, who was in charge of the school, said that it was the hardest task that I had imposed upon them. Of course, I couldn't stop her music altogether. Every girl ought to play a little. But Amabelle seemed utterly unwilling to content herself with a little, and it really has given me great concern. I would so hate to have her—why, to have people think that she was—oh, you know what people say about girls who give themselves up to that sort of thing. And now, it savors, too, of a sort of commercialism, don't you think so, Trina? But, of course, you don't. You never did agree with me about that sort of thing, and, having lived as

you have lived, you would be less able to accept my point of view than ever. I think a girl ought to be prettily accomplished in every way so that she will be a charming companion; but to absorb herself in a thing like that—why, it's almost eccentric, and even you will agree with me that men cannot bear eccentric women. Imagine the shock it was to me when I went to the convent—it was only a short time ago, too—and the silly child told me that some one had said that she could have a great career if she wanted to. Imagine! A career! It was then that I decided to take her away from the school."

"What is it that she is playing now?" Miss Anthony was listening to the music rather than to the petulant chatter at her side.

"I don't know, I'm sure. But I am going to tell her that she is not to touch the piano again—at least until after she is married." Miss Anthony had risen from her chair and was moving slowly toward the music room. "Won't you please tell her, Trina, that I wish to speak to her, and, if you have any faintest desire to help me, don't encourage her about that wretched stuff."

Miss Anthony stood for just a moment between the heavy portières looking at the girl who sat at the piano. An old bronze lantern hung over her head, and shed a soft twilight glow through the room. Oblivious to everything about her, the notes she played were expressing only an intense self-communion. To Miss Anthony it seemed as though she had come upon a devotee at her prayers.

"What is it, dear?" she asked, crossing softly to the piano. "I do not think I know it."

"No, it isn't anything, really," the girl spoke from out her absorption. "It is just something that I love, that I have done myself. Shall I play it over again for you? Listen, and I will say the words, too, for you may have forgotten them, but you will hear them all in the music, see all the lovely picture just as it is told." In a low, murmuring voice, she repeated the words:

"Oh, what if a sound should be made!
But no; it is made; list! 'Somewhere—mystery, where

In the leaves? In the air?
In my heart? is a motion made:
'Tis a motion of dawn, like a flicker of shade
on shade,
In the leaves 'tis palpable; low multitudinous
stirring
Upwinds through the woods; the little ones
softly conferring,
Have settled my lord's to be looked for; so
they are still;
But the air and my heart and the earth are
a-thrill,
And look where the wild duck sails round
the bend of the river,
And look where a passionate shiver
Expectant is bending the blades
Of the marsh grass in serial shimmers and
shades,
And invisible wings, fast fleeting, fast fleet-
ing,

Are beating
The dark overhead as my heart beats. And
steady and free
Is the ebb tide flowing from marsh to sea"

Under the girl's sensitive fingers, the rippling melody ran in and out with the little purling streams that over the old brown breast of the marshes drew their silver fretwork of lace. The dusky dawn stirred and woke. The wings of unseen birds beat even as the girl's own heart was beating, until, all gathered into a grand triumphal measure, the dawn and the tide swept on in glorious harmony.

"Oh, child, child!" The sound in Miss Anthony's throat was only a sob.

"You like it, too?" Amabelle asked, her fingers still caressing the keys in the murmur of the streams against the marsh grass. "You remember that you sent me the book, oh, long ago, marked in the places that you and my father loved. I told it, as I tell everything I care for, to this."

By only the slightest emphasis of the notes did she indicate that her music was her only confidante.

"Sister Elise loved it. She was the sweetest of them all, and she told me when she heard it that I should give up everything—name and fortune and everything—for the sake of the gift God had given me. But I knew mamma would not let me, and, when the time came that I could speak to her about it, she was very angry—with Sister Elise.

And I was forbidden to play any more; but, oh, Aunt Trina, if only I had no name, no anything but this!"

The words held a passion that should have been all outside the realm of any childish heart, but their import fell like ice upon Miss Anthony's brain. If the child had no name! She and she only in all the world knew the value of that *if*. But Amabelle was still talking.

"There are so many others, but I will play just one more for you. It is so different. I think it is called 'An Evening Song,' but I always call it just a love song—the sort of love that comes only to people who need only think of love, you know. Do you remember it, or shall I say the words?"

Now the slender fingers crushed out from the keys the overwhelming burden of the song that throbs throughout the universe, the song of love spoken by every lover to his mate.

"Look off, dear love, across the shallow sands,

And mark yon meeting of the sun and sea,
How long they kiss in sight of all the lands.
Ah, longer, longer, we."

In every crashing harmony, love's longing and love's passion cried aloud. Miss Anthony shivered as with actual pain. Where had the child learned anything of this, or was the agony evoked by her fingers only some hideous pre-science of any agony to be endured? But upon the tension of the music, the tension of the thoughts aroused by it, fell Mrs. Anthony's reproachful voice.

"Amabelle, have I or have I not requested you not to make yourself so ridiculous?"

"Yes, maminita, but it was only for this once—only for Aunt Trina!" With a sweet docility she rose from the bench. "I won't do it again, but I—I think that I will go to bed if you and Aunt Trina don't mind."

"Of course, we don't mind." Mrs. Anthony's voice was still reproachful, and, after the girl had left the room, its annoyance was vented upon Miss Anthony. "I asked you, Trina—"

"Oh, I know, Mabel, but it is so marvelous!"

"Now, Trina, do look at the thing

with common sense," Mrs. Anthony exclaimed. "Do you want to see the girl with frowsy hair, and frumpy gowns, and hard, bony fingers? I assure you that I think too much of my daughter's welfare to permit a thing like that, and don't you see the harm you might do just by saying that the child is marvelous? Men are not attracted by marvelous girls! Shan't we sit down and talk a little more before we go up? I shall be very busy after to-night, you know."

"Just as you like," Miss Anthony agreed, and she sat down in her own low chair by the fire, motioning Mrs. Anthony toward the seat that Hilary was wont to occupy at the other side of the hearth.

But Mabel Anthony stood for a few moments looking down at her sister-in-law, who, for some reason, in some indefinable way, seemed to have grown years older in the few moments that had just passed. And the first question that was asked joined itself to the surges of Amabelle's song that were still ringing through her brain.

"Trina, why did you never marry Dick Carter?"

"Why?" The word was repeated vaguely, the question was meaningless.

"Oh, don't be absurd," Mrs. Anthony pressed the point. "There's no use in pretending to me that you weren't in love with him, or that he wasn't in love with you, or that you weren't engaged to him—before you carried out that ridiculous plan of adopting a waif in a charity hospital."

"But, Mabel!" Miss Anthony's voice held a note that should have stopped Mrs. Anthony's progress, but she waived the protest aside.

"No, I'm not going to be frightened by you any more. It was all very well when I was living with you before, and, at that time, I was hoping that you and he would make up. Of course, he objected, as all the rest of us did, to your absurd whim—"

"Did Mr. Carter object?"

"There isn't a bit of use in it, Trina," returned Mrs. Anthony. "Of course he objected, and of course any man in

his senses would. But it really isn't too late now. You are only a few years older than I am, and I am just thirty-eight."

"Really, Mabel, don't you think your hands are full enough with your own matrimonial affairs and Amabelle's without mine?" laughed Miss Anthony.

"Oh, it isn't that. I'm thinking of Sir Hugh and of the family. Hilary is of age, and I don't see—no, I really don't see why you shouldn't give him a decent sum of money and let him go. Then you could marry Dick Carter, and everything would be as it should be."

Miss Anthony ignored the main issue. "Don't you think it would be rather unjust for me, after having brought the boy up to consider that he would be my heir, to turn him off now, with a decent sum of money, as you say?"

"Your heir! Trina! What do you mean? You are surely not going to leave a creature like that, a nobody, a boy without even a name, the whole of your fortune! Trina, it's impossible!"

"I cannot see why," shrugged Miss Anthony.

"But does Mr. Carter know that you have any such intentions?"

"Yes, he is one of the executors of my will. He is very fond of Hilary."

"Well, I must say—" Mrs. Anthony permitted herself to sink down into the deep leather chair, but she did not permit herself to complete the sentence she had begun. Instead, she opened the attack on a new side. "I dare say you'll think me impertinent—"

"Oh, I couldn't think that, after—" In Miss Anthony's laugh there was only indulgence toward a child.

"After what I have already said," concluded Mrs. Anthony. "But this is something different. I've always had an idea, I've always been quite sure that you knew more about Hilary's people than you admitted. Did you—"

"If I didn't admit it then, why should I admit it now?"

Again Miss Anthony shrugged her shoulders as though she might, in that way, rid herself of an annoyance.

"Did Mr. Harrison look into the matter for you?"

"No!"

Miss Anthony's monosyllable was spoken with a rising inflection that definitely demanded Mrs. Anthony's right to cross-question her.

"He just accepted what you told him?"

"Yes!"

"And Dick Carter accepted it?"

"Yes."

"Has Hilary himself ever questioned you about it?"

"Twice."

"And you told him——"

"I don't know whether to quarrel with you or not," laughed Miss Anthony. "I'd like to, and I would if you had been at home twenty-four hours. And, of course, I admit that the family into which so exalted a person as Sir Hugh is to marry should be irreproachable. Just what do you want to know, Mabel?"

"I asked you what you told Hilary when he asked you——"

"Well, I'll tell you," interrupted Miss Anthony. "The first time was when he was quite a small lad—before you went abroad. Some boy had called him names, and he came crying up to me and asked me if he didn't have any real name of his own, and if he hadn't had any father. I told him that he most assuredly had had a father, and that the name he had was not only his own, but that it was a good enough name to fight for. On the strength of the knowledge I imparted to him at that time he knocked the other boy's front teeth out."

"The next time that he spoke to me about it was just before he went away to college, and I told him then, flatly and positively, that I couldn't give him the information that he wanted, but that he might be very sure that there was nothing connected with it in any way of which he need be ashamed, and that if at any time during his life it was necessary for him to have the information, I would have it or leave it where he could obtain it; but that, unless such necessity did arise, I would greatly prefer not to give it to him. Fortunately, he did, at that time, and has ever since rated my preference

above his own desire. Now, is there anything else that I can tell you?"

Mrs. Anthony's eyes were on the fire, and she did not seem to hear the concluding question. After a few moments of silence, she asked:

"Has it ever occurred to you to ask yourself what you would do if Hilary were quite outside of your life—if he were quite free of any necessity of assistance from you—say, if he were to make a great success in—this—this idea that you were telling me about—or if he should marry some rich girl? Wouldn't you marry Dick Carter, then?"

The abrupt question struck upon nerves that had been quivering ever since Amabelle's love song had played upon them, and it seemed to Miss Anthony that the hurt could not but be visible to the questioner. In it she lost any possible insight that she might have gained into the project that was forming itself in Mrs. Anthony's fertile brain. She roused herself to answer:

"I've hardly contemplated the matter as yet, because Hilary is nothing but a boy, even if he is twenty-one and over, and the 'idea,' as you call it, is hardly formed in our own minds."

"Why isn't Hilary here?" was the next question presented to her. "Of course, it's quite evident that this is a man's room. The atmosphere of the whole house is mannish. Hilary's been living here with you, hasn't he?"

"Yes," Miss Anthony answered, and then she laughed a little maliciously. "If you want me to be quite frank with you, and I suppose you do in such a very intimate conversation, he read your letter in which you may remember you called him a great oaf, and then he promptly left the house."

"Trina, how could you?"

"Oh, I hadn't read it myself, you know. I didn't suppose you'd be calling anybody names in it, so I just asked him to read it to me. And there was no harm done, anyway. He knew before that you didn't like him, and, naturally, you know, when you don't

like a person, it is safe to say that he returns the compliment."

"You mean that Hilary doesn't like me?"

"Oh, no, not that he doesn't like you. He was too young to have any real likes or dislikes when you went away, but he realized that he would be just as well out of the way while you were here, so he took himself down to Idlewylde. He's blissfully happy there, especially when Mr. Carter is with him. By the way, he asked me how I thought Mr. Carter would do for Amabelle. So you see he doesn't think that Dick is still in love with me."

"Oh, boys are always terribly stupid on such subjects. But, Trina, of course, I did write that I'd rather not have him here, but I heard you telling Amabelle that he knew a number of nice young men, and perhaps—why, perhaps, it would be a little simpler to bring them to Amabelle if he—why, if he were here. Couldn't you write him—"

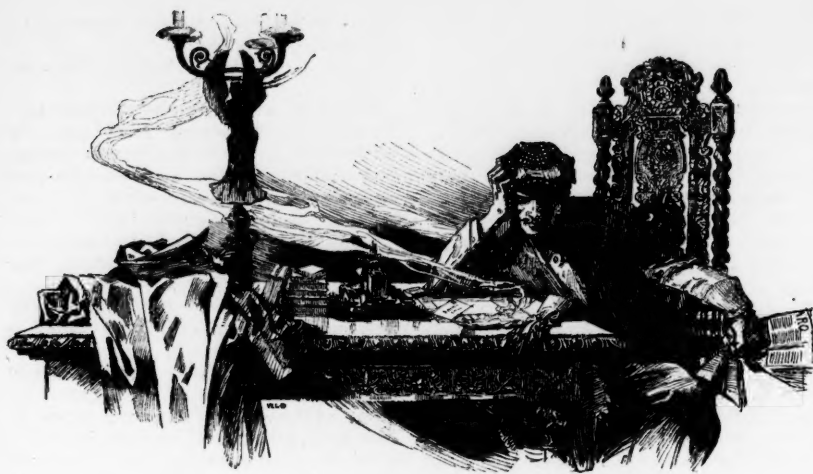
"Of course, I could write him," answered Miss Anthony, "but I'm not at all sure that he would come."

"Not if you made a special point of it? It would be so much easier for us, and so much nicer for Amabelle, to have a boy of that sort around. A houseful of women without a man in it is such a silly affair, and if Hilary came perhaps Mr. Carter would come, too."

Mrs. Anthony rose now and permitted the faintest yawn to stretch her pouting lips. "I suppose we ought to have a few girls running in and out on intimate terms, too," she said. "What sort of girls does Hilary like?"

Miss Anthony, woefully lacking in the guile that should have been hers, answered: "He has never liked any one but me. He hasn't passed through any girl ages yet—I suppose because he has always had me."

Mrs. Anthony bent her plump little body, and kissed her sister-in-law. "Good night, Trina, dear. It's so good to be at home again, and so good to feel really intimate with some one, too. Good night, dear."



A Motorist's Christmas

By Maurice LeBlanc

ILLUSTRATED BY WILLIAM DE LEFTWICH DODGE

I HAD passed a miserable night. With a shaking hand I opened the newspaper which my servant brought me, and sought the column containing the news items. A cry escaped me. I saw the heading: "Child crushed by an automobile."

I was on the point of crumpling the paper and throwing it away, so that, in ignorance of the details of the time and place of the accident, I should never know if the child I had run down the afternoon before had died in consequence of his injuries. I conquered the impulse. I once more unfolded the paper, and read as follows:

Yesterday, at five o'clock in the afternoon, in the Rue des Batignolles, an automobile, traveling at great speed, knocked down a child of five years, and continued on its way before any one could take note of its number.

The child was taken to the house of its mother, the Widow Maréchal, 54 Rue des Dames, where it died a few hours later.

Then I had killed it!

For a long time I sat there motionless, overwhelmed at the catastrophe. Since the evening before I had been struggling against the inevitable, the terrible truth which I had dreaded to know—I had been struggling, but at the cost of what superhuman efforts! Oh, that accursed evening, that abominable Christmas Eve supper, where I had tried to stupefy myself, that night of nightmare and agony! How many times I resolved to hasten to the place of the accident and find out the truth! And, knowing the truth, I could have repaired my action to a certain extent. And yet I hadn't done so. We are so cowardly in the face of suffering.

Now I knew. Then why did I not act?

To act was to go out, ring at a certain door, denounce myself, be a witness to the despair of the mother, be an object of her hatred. I should thus

have to subject myself to a harrowing experience. I should have to expose myself to inevitable and well-deserved reproaches.

To act would result in all that. Had I the courage to face it?

I rang the bell violently to summon my servant.

"Pack my bag. I am going South."

I had made up my mind. No one suspected my secret. I was alone, face to face with an enemy. With a little skill, by force of certain distractions—the gaming table, for instance—would it not be easy for me to rout this enemy and drive all thought of him from my mind? Thinking of Monte Carlo, I took a large sum of money from the safe and put it in my pocketbook.

Then I went out to bid good-by to certain of my friends before my departure. It was a cold, clear Christmas morning, the streets were filled with people in holiday attire, and the bells rang out pæans of joy and triumph, calling up visions of the little child who was born that day.

Children! I saw only them everywhere, as if the crowds were composed only of children, and I thought of the other, the little one of the evening before. What did he look like? Was he fair or dark, pretty or ugly?

I stopped suddenly; in my absorption I had crossed the Parc Monceau and was walking along the Boulevard de Courcelles. Now I was not far from the place.

I longed to retrace my steps, but somehow or other I could not. I had to keep on, keep on! A few minutes later, trembling as with an ague, I found myself stationed on the sidewalk opposite, gazing at No. 54 Rue des Dames, a narrow house, of poor and forlorn aspect, the ground floor of which was occupied by a fruit shop.

It seemed to me that an extraordinary number of people were going in and coming out—friends, relatives, doubtless. My heart rose into my throat. A boundless pity took possession of me, and I moved a step forward.

But no, it was absurd. What was

the use, since no one knew, since I myself was going to forget it all?

A cab passed. I leaped into it, giving the driver my address.

And then at the corner of the street I called out to him to stop. I got out of the cab, and with no further hesitation, imbued with a sense of duty which was stronger than anything else, stronger than my instincts, my fear, my cowardice, I returned to the house, questioned the porter, mounted five flights of stairs, and rang the bell.

"Madame Maréchal?" I said to the old woman who opened the door for me.

She ushered me into a chilly, poorly furnished room, and said:

"I will call my daughter. She is with our poor child."

After a moment or two Madame Maréchal came out of the next room. She was a woman still young, with a sweet, sad face. She had evidently been crying, for her eyes were red and her cheeks were glistening with tears.

"Did you wish to speak to me, monsieur?" she murmured.

I looked at her for some seconds, my heart contracting with pain and remorse. So this was the poor, grief-stricken creature, whose life I had robbed of its greatest treasure! Madame Maréchal repeated her question, and I managed to answer:

"It was I—madame—I—who ran over—yesterday—it was I——"

She groaned aloud.

"Ah, you, monsieur, were the one who——"

She showed no anger, no repulsion, but a resignation which stabbed me through and through.

"Listen, madame," I said. "I cannot undo what is done, and what I have come to propose can be no consolation to your sorrow. A mother lives only for her child, and when that child is no more nothing can console her. And yet I would like to tell you that I will defray all the expenses—the funeral—the little grave—all."

She looked at me with a sort of astonishment, as if she did not understand what I was saying.



"Of course we were very much frightened at first, but he is only bruised."

"And that is not all," I went on falteringly. "You yourself shall fix the damage—the yearly sum—my lawyer——"

The expression of her eyes disconcerted me so that I could not go on. We were like two people who did not speak the same language.

Finally she seized me by the arm and led me into the next room. Her mother was leaning over a little bed. The old woman saw me and stepped aside; and as I did not dare to turn my eyes upon my victim, she made me a sign to approach.

And I saw—oh, the wonderful sight!—I saw, among toys scattered upon the bed, a smiling child, a fair-haired boy,

a little pale perhaps, but alive, oh, thoroughly alive!

"I read in the papers——" I murmured.

"That he was dead? It was a mistake. Of course, we were very much frightened at first, but he is only bruised. The doctor has just gone, and he told us there was no reason whatever to worry."

It seemed to me as if I were escaping from the clutches of some monster, from the horror of an abominable dream. I drew a long breath of relief. Once more the world was bright and filled with sunshine.

And the thought came to me that if I had resisted that inner voice which

ordered me to assume bravely the responsibility of my action, I should never have known the blessed truth and would have had to suffer all my life a twofold remorse—for having taken a human life and for having been a coward.

It is certainly worth while to do one's duty.

I said to the child:

"What beautiful toys! Who brought them to you?"

"Santa Claus," he answered. "He came down the chimney."

I went toward the fireplace, bent down, and, taking out my pocketbook, I pretended to find it among the ashes.

"Oh, here is something you haven't seen! Take it! It is yours! Take it!"

Oh, the joyful Christmas time!



The Letter

NIGHT descending dark and dreary
On a winter's day of rain
Found me all alone and weary
With a fever on my brain.
By the fire in the gloaming,
Through the past my thoughts went roaming,
When they brought to me her letter.

Will it give me joy or sorrow?
Will my heart be once again
Happy in the bright to-morrow?
Will the sun break through the rain?
Wondering thus, I fell a-dreaming
By the lamplight softly streaming,
In my hand the fateful letter.

And I dreamed of summer glory,
Dreamed of misty evening skies,
When I sought the sweetest story
In a pair of roguish eyes.
"Are those days," I cried, "returning
To fulfill my ardent yearning?"
Never answer made the letter.

If for worse or if for better,
Caring not what I should see,
Madly then I tore the letter,
From its spell I would be free;
But the lines with every reading,
Grew, alas, still more misleading.
Was there hope in such a letter?

Then the fire flared up and dying
Cast a faint red glow around;
Was it just the wind whose sighing
Stirred the air with mournful sound?
So in doubt and disbelieving
Did I spend the night with grieving,
Grieving over just a letter.

EDWARD D. TITTMANN.



What the Editor Has to Say

THE first installment of the new serial, "Marcia," by Anne O'Hagan, of which we had something to say a month ago, appears in the number of SMITH's now in your hands. If you have read it already, as we hope you have, you know without our telling you how great and how unusual a story it is. It isn't every serial that gets better and stronger steadily as it goes along. "Marcia" does, however. The second installment, which will appear in the number out on the news stands in a month, contains a big dramatic climax with a real thrill to it. The whole story will be completed in three big installments.

THE complete novel in the February number of SMITH's is by Emma Lee Walton, with whose work you are already more or less acquainted. It is called "The Twig," and is told in the form of a girl's journal. It is a charming, well-told love story of two young people who are searching for ancestors. Also in the same number of the magazine will appear the last half of the splendid two-part story, "Miss Anthony," by Kathryn Jarboe, which begins in this number.

DO you know any one who advises you to buy something you can't afford, giving as a reason for the advice the time-worn phrase, "You'll be young only once"? You know the sort of things people justify by that phrase. They are generally things that need justification of some sort. Perhaps all of us have yielded to the charm

of the theory, and perhaps been sorry for it afterward. Whether this has been your experience or not, please, please read Hildegard Lavender's story, or essay, or paper, whatever you like to call it, "The 'Only Once' Theory," in next month's SMITH's. Its moral is one which we heartily indorse, and it is as interesting reading as if there were no moral at all.

WE would like to call your attention to the Beauty Department in the section of the magazine immediately following these pages. You will find it of real practical value, and you can rely on any advice you may find in it. It is conducted by a regularly practicing physician, who will be glad to answer any questions on matters appertaining to personal appearance. This does not mean that general medical advice will be furnished or that any cases which require the services of a physician will be considered. There is no charge for an answer, but a stamped and addressed envelope must be inclosed with the request for information.

THERE is a good story, "The Singing Hand," by Grace Margaret Gallaher, in the February issue, also a good story in a different vein, "The Lady of the Leopards," by Charlotte Weir; also another good story in still another vein, by Holman F. Day. There are other good things in the same issue, by Virginia Middleton, Wallace Irwin, Charles Battell Loomis, Anne Rittenhouse, and others.

The Bath— Healthful and Beautiful

By Dr. Lillian Whitney

ILLUSTRATED
WITH PHOTOGRAPHS BY
GRACE COOK

WATER is nature's cosmetic! A moment's reflection convinces us that it is absolutely essential to the vitality of everything possessing life. A draft of water is often resuscitating, and a plunge into it is rejuvenating. It is the most abundant thing in all nature, and perhaps because of this fact we do not appreciate its great value in promoting health and beautifying the skin. No raiment, however becoming, can disguise an unclean, odoriferous body, and no "make-up," however ably applied, can hide a poor complexion.

The skin is not only nature's protective covering for the body, but its functions are as great and more varied than that of other organs to which we attribute more importance. For instance, the skin performs the act of respiration, not, of course, to the extent of the lungs, but it *absorbs* oxygen and throws off carbonic acid; it lightens the labor of the kidneys by getting rid of much waste matter in the perspiration; it helps to regulate and to equalize the temperature of the body.

In this wonderful organ are contained the terminal ends of the nerves of sensation; the interchange of waste and repair, that is, of nutrition, occurs in the tiny blood vessels upon the periphery of the body; in addition to all this the skin is supplied with an endless number of oil and sweat glands, whose outlet are the millions of pores



An improvised vapor bath.

upon its surface, and it is by means of these glands and these minute openings that the varied function of the skin is performed.

The beauty of a skin does not depend so much upon its inherent qualities—its texture, grain, and coloring—as it does upon its health. It is universally conceded that a skin glowing with vitality is a great attraction, and this condition is only possible when the skin is kept in a state of absolute cleanliness; it cannot react to every varying shade of temperature, i. e., extremes of heat and cold, and functionate in other respects, unless the pores are freed from waste matter from within and without.

Why is it then that every woman is not a devotee of the bath? The foundation of true comeliness lies in a daily tubbing. She of modest means envies her more fortunate sister because of the manifold aids to beauty within her reach, oblivious to the great fact that cleanliness is beauty, and that nature has provided abundantly for it.

The complete immersion of the body in water is the surest, as well as the quickest, means of attaining this end; but in order that the daily bath be most beautifying in its effect, the temperature of the water, and the character of the soap and other ingredients used, should receive serious consideration. Cold water is not as cleansing as warm or hot, but it is more tonic, more invigorating.

The ideal bath, if the health permits, is tepid; many delicate women prefer a higher temperature, but it should be carefully regulated to suit individual requirements; one can habituate the body to degrees of temperature, as every one knows, and this is an important item to observe, as daily hot baths lower the tone of the skin and have a decided enervating effect upon the entire system. Another matter rarely thought of is the *quality* of the water. Hard water is injurious to some skins; soft water is in every respect more cleansing and soothing; a small amount of borax or of toilet ammonia is all that is necessary to insure a fairly bland water.

The question of soap is of paramount importance. Many soaps of reliable make are injurious in special cases, because they dissolve the natural oils of the skin and leave it harsh and dry. A great many women prefer making their own toilet soap, but one is pretty safe in adhering to pure Castile soap; colored and heavily scented soaps are almost always undesirable. The so-called Marine Soap is made of cocoanut oil; it dissolves in soft water, and **should** be used only when taking a salt bath, as the oil decomposes rapidly, and in order to make it up into soap it must contain an excess of lye, which is very irritating.

The skin is benefited by exercise just as any other tissue, and the value of a bath is greatly enhanced if a certain amount of friction can be produced; a bath brush or a pair of luffa mittens is excellent for this purpose, the skin soon accustoms itself to the harshness of either; the cleansing and stimulating effect results in a firm skin of exquisite

velvety texture. A cool shower after the warm bath, followed by a rubdown with a coarse towel, is also delightfully invigorating, and creates as much stimulation as some can tolerate.

Skin which has not been subjected to frequent bathing may assume a roughness or harshness that is not only extremely unpleasant to the touch, but unsightly as well.

The greatest improvement follows the use of emollient baths, and of the meals, such as bran, oatmeal, and the like, thrown into the water; or this well-tried recipe can be followed:

Draw a bath of very hot water, in which soak from two to six pounds of equal parts of bran, oatmeal, and cornstarch, adding one-half pound of gelatine; allow the water to fall to the desired temperature and immerse the body in this bath for fifteen or twenty minutes; under this treatment the hardest skin soon becomes soft, white, and delightfully supple.

Many fastidious women of refined taste are not content with the ordinary bath, but are at a loss to know just what will enhance its beautifying and cleansing properties. To fill this need, nothing can equal the perfumed bath bags within the reach of all; they are made of cheesecloth, and loosely filled with this compound:

Oatmeal	5	pounds
Powdered Florentine orris		
root	1	pound
Almond meal	1	pound
Pure Castile soap—scraped	½	pound

These little bags are tossed into the bath to any desirable number, imparting a milkiness and delicious fragrance that is very satisfying. Baths of bran and carbonate of soda are healing to eruptive or irritable skins.

Although of decidedly cleanly habits, there are some from whose bodies exudes an odor objectionable enough to be experienced by themselves. This condition is sometimes dependent upon the nervous system. A soap impregnated with a tonic antiseptic, such as eucalyptus, has been found of much advantage, and, after the bath, the local



The kind of bath accessories are important.

use of a dusting powder: Five grains of salicylic acid to an ounce of lycopodium, for instance.

Tonic baths are of great value in overcoming fatigue, as well as imparting a refreshing and rejuvenating effect upon jaded, worn-out nerves. The simplest of these is the addition of a good toilet vinegar to the regular bath, or, better still, a general spray of the vinegar immediately following the bath; it is essential to use it directly as part of the bath, when the skin is softened, the pores opened, and the entire body in a receptive condition. One of the most satisfying toilet vinegars to use undiluted consists of:

Essence of bergamot..	20 minims
Essence of ambergris.	4 drams
Essence of vanilla....	30 minims
Oil of neroli.....	30 minims
Strong acetic acid....	160 minims
Alcohol (84 degrees).	6 ounces

An alcohol bath is excellent in re-

laxed muscular conditions. It can be rubbed into the skin after one general tubbing, or added to the bath in this proportion:

Alcohol	4 ounces
Ammonia	½ ounce
Oil of lavender.....	1 dram

Much has been said of pine-needle baths as strengthening to tired-out nerves; baths of this description are usually given in sanatoria, but they can be prepared at home if the resinous needles and cones can be gathered; unless they are fresh and just properly ripened, the desired effect will not be developed. A mass of pine needles and cones are broken into a pail of boiling water and allowed to steep for half an hour; the infusion is then strained, and added to the bath.

Baths of this description have found much favor in Germany, where the treatment of nervous disorders by



Add sufficient quantity of sea salt to ordinary bath.

means of medicated-water cures originated; but there is no reason why such measures, intelligently carried out, cannot be tried at home with amazing benefits, too. In neuralgia and rheumatism nothing has been found to equal, in efficiency, the soothing action of a hot bath containing oil of turpentine and green soap. Immersion for fifteen minutes in this bath, followed by a gentle rubdown and refreshing sleep, vanquishes all nerve pain and restores not only youth, but the *essence*, the *spirit* of youth.

The habit of promiscuous surf bathing indulged to so great an extent on the American coast is a very bad one. Sea salt is of great value in many conditions, and open-air sea bathing is beneficial in moderation and when in good health, as it stimulates the appetite and aids digestion, but when prolonged far beyond the stage of reaction, it becomes harmful, as is proclaimed

by the livid faces, blue lips, and shrunk-en skins so often encountered among the bathers.

Only those in most vigorous condition should attempt a daily surf bath, yet one often sees women in comparatively indifferent health go into the ocean several times in a single day; they may feel no immediate bad effect, but the practice is a foolish one, and is severely condemned by hygienists.

Hot sea baths are extremely beneficial in a great many instances, and one doesn't have to go to the seaside to get the advantage of them, because they can be prepared at home by adding a sufficient quantity of Mediterranean sea salt to the ordinary bath; the strength of the bath depends, of course, upon the amount of salt used; one-half the contents of one of the bags in which the salt is put up is the usual quantity advised. If soap is desired, remember the Marine Soap mentioned earlier in connection with soaps.

Although we regard ourselves as ultracivilized to-day, we have much to learn from the ancient Greeks and Romans in matters pertaining to the care of the body. The Romans especially were no dilettantes when it comes to bathing, the sumptuous apartments reserved for this purpose in the homes of the wealthy outrivaling anything attempted along this line by even our multimillionaires.

Our modern idea of a Turkish bath is based largely upon the Roman one of a succession of gradually increasing elevations of temperature, plunges into water of lesser degree, massage, and flagellation of the body, and, lastly, the anointment of the skin with perfumed emollients. We have no home facilities for indulging in baths of such exquisite luxury, but we can imitate them upon a smaller scale, and attain almost the same gratifying results, particularly when the imagination is allowed full play.

The room in which the bath is taken should be heated comfortably by means of the steam from the hot water that supplies the bath; at least a pint of very hot water should be sipped in the

heated room, in order to open the pores more effectually. A wise precaution before entering the water is to envelop the head with a towel dipped in cold water, and to renew it as often as necessary, because very hot baths in superheated air are apt to produce dizziness, fainting, and the like; indeed, those of plethoric habit, or with weak hearts, should taboo exceedingly hot baths and air altogether.

After emerging from the hot bath, take a shower, if possible, beginning

Powdered talc. 1 pound
 Extract of jasmine. $\frac{3}{4}$ ounce
 Extract of musk... $\frac{1}{4}$ ounce
 Oil of rose..... 8 drops (Mix).

Prolonged warm baths are sometimes advised because of their soporific effect; they should never be indulged in except when a second person is close at hand, as they invite grogginess very speedily in some constitutions, and many mysterious cases of bathtub drowning might be explained on this



The perfumed bath bags can be prepared at home.

with the water quite warm, and gradually lower until it is as cool as can be borne comfortably; thoroughly rub the body down with a Turkish towel, which simulates massage to a limited extent; and last, if the quality of the skin requires it, anoint the body with a perfumed oily lotion, or, where an astringent action is preferred, with a delicately scented toilet water.

The use of a powder over the entire body is also grateful to the skin, while beneficial in many ways. This is a very good one:

hypothesis. The warm bath for purposes of cleanliness is the only one suggested here, and it occupies but five very active minutes.

When the shower previously referred to is not within reach, the temperature of the hot bath should be gradually lowered with the addition of cold running water; a douche consisting of a constant stream pouring upon the body is also delightfully bracing, following the superheated bath. A hose can be attached to the double faucet, and the temperature of the water regulated un-

til it can be borne quite cold; the force with which the stream strikes the body can also be graduated very easily.

In this way the skin alone may be effected, or deeper structures are stimulated, at will. A stream of cold water, thrown up and down the spinal column, is marvelously beneficial in restoring lost nerve tone—the so-called neurasthenic spine responds wonderfully to this kind of stimulation.

Vapor, or Russian, baths are resorted to in uric-acid conditions and in obesity. It is an excellent means of ridding the body of effete matter, and of inducing copious perspiration, which aids so materially in eliminating surplus fat.

For purposes of home use, bath cabinets made of heavy rubber sheeting can be procured; but an equally good domestic substitute is a heavy blanket—or a couple of steamer rugs—an old cane-seated chair, a spirit lamp, and a basin of boiling water. Place the lighted lamp and water *directly* under the cane seat; now divest yourself of all clothing, and, after seating yourself upon a chair, draw the blanket around your neck and allow it to fall over the chair and to the floor on all sides. Vapor will soon accumulate under the blanket, and if hot water is sipped at the same time, the effect is enhanced.

These are extremely convenient baths to take at home, as they occupy so little space and can be carried out in any room, the entire heat generated being under the blankets. Care must be taken that the blanket is spread well out of the way of the lamp.

American women, especially wage earners, do not appreciate to the extent they should the great value of aromatic baths and of the addition of perfumes to the regular bath as a means of supplying a soothing stimulation that seems a daily need in this strenuous age.

In this connection we can learn much from the Japanese; our conceptions of the benefits derived from bathing are infantile by comparison. For a gentle stimulus, the Continental perfumes diluted in a tub of water cannot be mentioned beside the Oriental. Many women object to Oriental scents as being too heavy; they are overpowering when used in quantity, but when reduced to proper proportions in a generous bath, they become absolutely energizing, electrifying, in their delightful effect; the day's strenuousness is forgotten, and the entire body recharged, revitalized.

Perfumed bath tablets, perfumed sea salt, and various other delightful aids to the bath are now procurable, and should be more generally known and used. Bowls made of sandalwood, that hold one's soap, etc., are allowed to float on the water, thus imparting to it the evanescent fragrance of the wood; all these charming toilet accessions are inexpensive, and they cease to be pure luxuries when their wonderful power of restoration is appreciated. The initial cost of most things we regard as luxuries is, as a rule, their only cost, because they are of such quality that they prove themselves "a thing of beauty and a joy forever."

Dr. Whitney will be glad to answer, free of charge, all reasonable questions relating to beauty and health. Private replies will be sent to those enclosing a self-addressed stamped envelope. Address: Beauty Department, SMITH'S MAGAZINE, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York.





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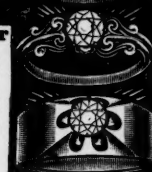
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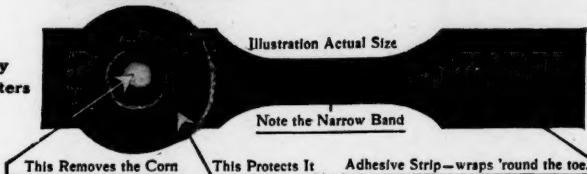
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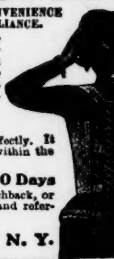
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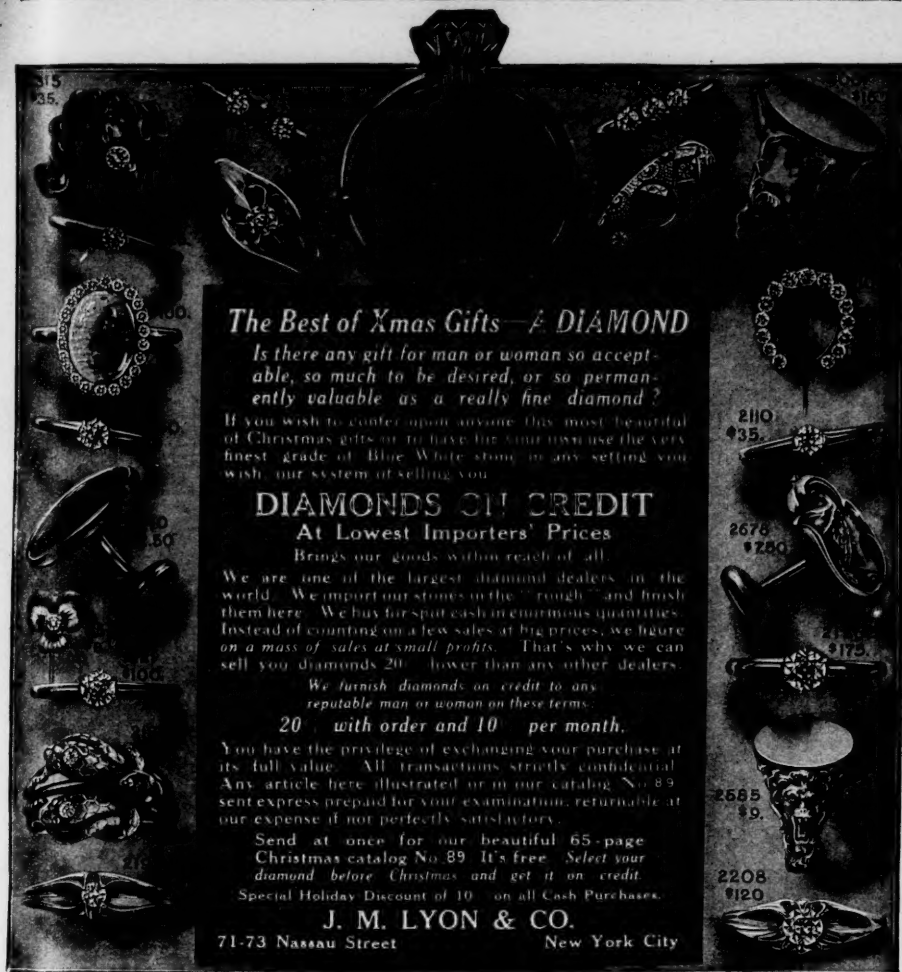
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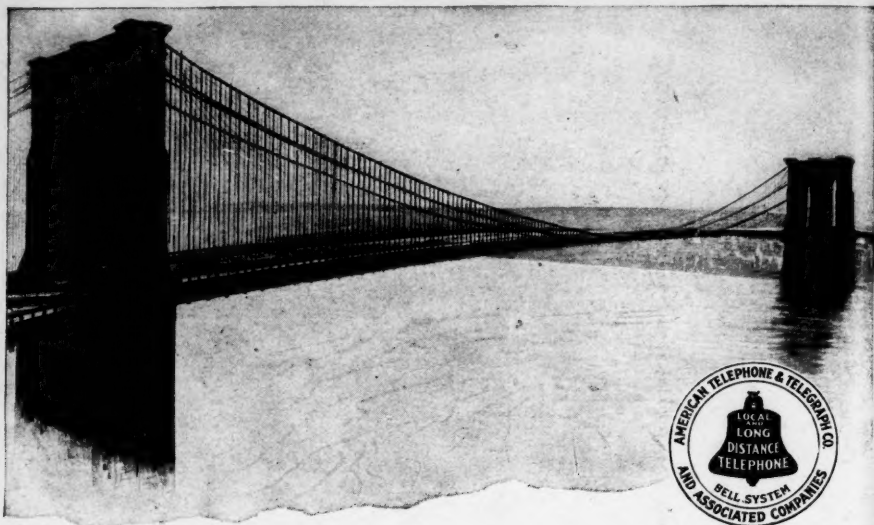
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